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Sortes Horatianæ.

A

POETICAL REVIEW

OF

POETICAL TALENT,

&c. &c. &c.

WITH NOTES.

52741

Primum ego me illorum, dederim quibus esse poëtis,
Excerpam numero. Neque enim concludere versum
Dixeris esse satis; neque, si quis scribat, uti nos
Sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse poëtam.
Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.

Hor. *Sat.* lib. i. 4.

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SORTES HORATIANÆ.

In earlier times, when Truth first deign'd to scan
The rising follies and the crimes of Man,
To view, with steadfast, unabating glance,
Vice and the vicious, as they dar'd advance,
At once to wound, and heal, her hand divine
Seized the strong aid of Satire's powerful line;
And smote, in Virtue's and in Honor's cause,
The bold contemners of their sacred laws.

PARAPHRASE.

L'ardeur de se montrer, et non pas de médire,
Arma la Verité du vers de la Satire.
Lucile le premier osa la faire voir:
Aux vices des Romains presenta le miroir:
Vengea l'humble Vertu, de la Richesse altiere,
Et l'honnête Homme à pied, du Faquin en litiere.

Lucilius, then, by her alone impell'd,
To guilty Rome the blazing mirror held;
Took his firm stand by humble Virtue's side,
And stretch'd his arm 'twixt Poverty and Pride.
With soft, yet poignant vein, next Horace rose,
Hurling her shafts against a host of foes,
And, hapless he, whose name or fault agreed,
Nor broke the verse, that endless shame decreed.

PARAPHRASE.

Horace à cette aigreur mêla son enjouement.
On ne fut plus ni fat ni sot impunement:
Et, malheur à tout nom, qui propre à la censure
Pût entrer dans un vers, sans rompre la mesure.
Perse en ses vers obscurs, mais serrés et pressans,
Affecta d'enfermer moins de mots que de sens.
Juvenal, elevé dans les cris de l'Ecole,
Poussa jusqu'à l'excès sa mordante hyperbole
Ses ouvrages tout pleins d'affreuses vérités
.....

A Persius, too, endued with all her fire,
Swept, though with hand uncouth, his angry lyre;
Compress'd the efforts of his manly pow'rs,
And gave the thorns, but cast away the flow'rs.
Nor less that pupil of the sterner school,
Fraught with hyperbole, and harsh by rule,
Dark deeds of infamy to light exposed,
And frowning Satire's ancient phalanx closed.

I, too, like these, might brand a guilty age,
And stamp the crimes of Princes on my page;—
Might paint the times, when B—j—f—d can clear
The price of shame, "three hundred pounds a year;"—
When loose adult'ry *, licensed, stalks sublime,
Ev'n from the Bench pronounced "a venial crime;"—

NOTES.

* . . . . . vitio . . . potens
Regnat adulter . . . . . .

SENECA: *Hippolitus.* Act 3.

When C—m—rs pleads an " injur'd murd'rer's"
cause,
Defends the guilty, and insults the laws;—
But no!—Uncalled, 'tis not for me to stand
The public Censor of a tainted band;
To place the guilty in a nation's view,
Or taunt the many with the worthless few.
These, and ten thousand such (too few to prove
How wide, and ah! how high the vices rove!)
Require, than mine, a bolder, firmer hand,
To sweep " the pestilence from out the land;"
A louder voice, a more effectual rod*,
To smite the foes of Justice, and of God.
Mine be an humbler task; along the road
That Pope for Dulness and for Dunces trode,

NOTES.

* Where was thine arm, O Vengeance! where thy rod,
That smote the foes of Zion and of God?
CAMPBELL.

When high the Goddess on her throne he rais'd,
And, struck with rapture, crowds admiring gaz'd,
There let me tread; and paint, in easy rhymes,
The Henleys, Cibbers, Ralphs of modern times.
Him let me emulate, the "unknown Bard*,"
Who sought no praise, who sighed for no reward,
Save that, which consciousness of right can give
To those, who for the Muse and Virtue strive:

NOTES.

* When I speak of the author of the "Pursuits of Literature," I cannot help expressing my admiration of a man, whose labours, though anonymous, were always devoted to the cause of religion and virtue. Among the few prejudices discoverable in his excellent work, is a singular dislike of typographical embellishment. "If," says he, "the present rage for printing on fine, creamy, wire-wove, vellum, hot-pressed paper, be not stopped, the injury done to the eye from reading, and the shameful expense of the book itself, will, in a very long time, annihilate the desire of reading, and the possibility of purchasing." But what would he now say, to see his own poem, containing these very opinions, supported

Him *, too, whos · mightier arm hath swept away
The airy flutt'rers of a summer's day,
That, floating round the dim poetic scene,
Sank 'neath the blow, and never more have been.

To thee,—whose lay in rising youth contemn'd
The venal critics†, and the current stemm'd,
That, rushing wildly as their native "stream‡,"
Had smother'd Genius in its early dream:—

NOTES.

by the "indignant words of Apuleius," *printed on imperial paper, price five guineas in extra boards*; for,

"To this complexion is it come at last!"

* Of the Baviad and Mæviad it is needless to make an observation, as to its excellence. It would not have been rendered less valuable by omitting to annex the virulent epistle to Peter Pindar, or the tedious "procès verbal" of Anthony Pasquin.

† Ille ..... direxit brachia contra
Torrentem (et) civis erat qui liberè posset
Verba animi proferre. Juv. *Sat.* 4.

‡ The Frith of Forth.

Whose manly breast the bearded arrow spurn'd,
And, back with speed, th' envenom'd shaft return'd:
To thee,—whose lofty strain, in later days,
Hath found its meed, the Muse's warmest praise:—
Byron! to thee, I dedicate my song,
Arm'd, for the Nine, with Satire's cutting thong;
To lash the would-be Poets of our age,
And strike at Folly thro' her rhyming page.
Yet, tho' my pen indignant must disclaim
The base pretenders to poetic fame,
Think not my bosom, false to Genius' fires,
Ne'er felt the warmth the true-born Muse inspires;
'Tis that, alone, has steel'd my ardent breast,
And bade me poise the biting lance in rest;
Forc'd, from its scabbard, e'en *my* maiden sword
To try its temper on the rhyming horde.
Still, as I roam along my destin'd way,
The heart-felt tribute of applause I'll pay
To those, who, borne upon a wing of flame,
Have reach'd, with arduous flight, the shrine of Fame.

Then, first to thee, O, Byron! shall the Muse
Pour what she feels, nor thou the praise refuse.
Who have not own'd, as, with the "Childe*," they
trac'd
The lovely scenes Misanthropy defac'd,
Compassion's sigh for one, to virtue lost,
And on the stormy sea of passion tost;
Forc'd, by its billows, evermore to roam
Far from his native land, his once lov'd home;
And while, with sadden'd glance, his jaundiced eye
Ting'd with sick hue each brightest object nigh,

NOTES.

* On the merits of "Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage" I will not enlarge, as the sentiments of the Reviewers are in unison with those of the general reader. In brilliancy of versification this exquisite poem is superior to the "Minstrel" and the "Fairy Queen;" and, in accurate imagery, not inferior to the "Seasons." Lord Byron's subsequent publication (The Giaour), contains a description of the "yet warm dead," of which, I think, the English language affords no parallel.

Still ev'ry thought the same impression gave,
And stamp'd the man—despair's unhappy slave!
Who have not, then, the Poet's pow'r confest,
To sway the feelings of the throbbing breast;
To raise stern horror for a moment there,
And then to soothe it with soft pity's tear!
Have they not felt, as well, *his* hapless doom,
Who mourns his Thyrza, shrouded in her tomb;
Who weaves the fun'ral wreath, imbued with tears,
As the sad tribute to succeeding years;
And hangs his lyre upon the cypress tree
That shades her grave, in sad solemnity*!

NOTES.

* Tu, che ne vai in Pindo,
Ivi pende mia cetra ad un cipresso,
Salutala in mio nome, e dille poi
Ch'io son dagl'anni e da fortuna oppresso.
TASSO.

Thou, who to Pindus' flowery heights may'st go,
Where hangs my lyre upon the cypress tree,
Hail it from me; and say, that years, and woe,
Oppress the bard with heaviest misery.

Now will we turn, awhile, where hand in hand
The twin-like children of the Muses stand;
Campbell and Rogers:—blest with native fires,
One chaplet decks them, and one shrine inspires.
From me they need not;—nobler pens than mine
Have prais'd the nervous thought, th'harmonious line,
Where soothing Hope the sadden'd heart beguiles,
Or Mem'ry cheers it with remember'd smiles.
But here is one, who dares attempt, e'en now,
To share the wreath, or snatch it from their brow.
He sings not Hope "the charmer's" soft control;
But Hope deferr'd, the sick'ner of the soul.
His Harolde seeks no Mem'ry's soft'ning aid,
If Mem'ry come, she comes with fear array'd,
With piercing eye, and hand with dagger arm'd,
To strike the bosom, by no virtues charm'd!
Yes, there is one, whose strain like theirs shall live,
Deck'd with the charms that poesy can give,
To future ages shall descend, and claim,
With them united, never dying fame.

So, the bright stars, Orion's belt that form,
Shine thro' the tempest, and defy the storm;
So, blazing shed thro' Heav'n's sublime expanse,
From year to year, their undiminish'd glance;
So shall they ever,—'mid the spheres sublime,
Feel no rude shock, nor dread the hand of Time!
On such as these how fain the mind would pause,
And greet transcendent merit with applause!
Not such my task, nor such my anxious aim,
I, as my own, must ev'ry blockhead claim;
Pilf'rers or Punsters, Wits or Critic fools,
The Ass of nature or the Ass of schools.

Well said the Roman, in his courtly strain,
Poetic mimics* are a servile train;

NOTES.

Imitatores, servum pecus.

Hor. *Epist.* lib. i. p. 19.

Parrots, who learn their only song by rote,
And prate for ever in a borrowed note.
E'en now, what numbers strive in vain to soar
Where Scott and Campbell led the way before!
Didactic Bards could once the town engage,
With "Pleasures" drugg'd, now "Lays" are all the rage.
Croker, and all the swarm who "write with ease,"
Mitford, and Holford*, modern Sapphos, please
Fantastic readers, that with equal eye
View'd Hayley's† drawling verse and Wordsworth's lullaby.

NOTES.

* Miss Mitford is authoress of "Christina, or the Maid of the South Seas;" and Miss Holford, of "Wallace, or the Fight of Falkirk;" both written in humble imitation of Mr. Scott, and "*very pretty*" *poems* "*in their way.*"

† Mr. Hayley has left the "genus irritabile vatum"

Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.

Still, with the greatest, titled * Grenville vies,
Whom awed Plebeians mark aspiring rise,

NOTES.

Or, in other words,

.....every wheel of that unwearied mill
That turn'd ten thousand verses, now stands still.

* From Moore so lashed, example fit,
Shun petty larceny in wit.

Such was the advice of Green. But, alas! it is all in vain. If the plentiful supply of satirical acid, which has been administered to the literary offenders of this and the last century, had produced any effect in preventing others from catching the contagion, I should not have had the trouble of wading through the pages of the Right *Honorable* Lord George Grenville. I would willingly believe that Lord G——'s "peccatum" is, like that of Terence, "imprudentia"

Poetæ non qui furtum facere studuerit†.

But I am sadly afraid that his lordship's Muse has addicted herself to the bad habits of "picking and stealing," till she has lost

---

† Prol. ad Terent. Eunuch.

Blend, with some scraps from high Parnassus caught,
The trite description, and the hackney'd thought;

NOTES.

all idea of "the difference between meum and tuum." In support of this opinion I have subjoined a few extracts from "Portugal;" and for further proofs, refer to the poem itself, from page 1 to the end.

Yes, in that gen'rous cause for ever high.

Portugal, p. 4.

Yes, in that gen'rous cause for ever strong.

Pleasures of Hope.

For manly courage mourn, untimely lost,
Still often lavish'd, when 'tis needed most.

P. 82.

For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employed, and wanted most.

Introduction to Marmion

Perchance it trickle to a stranger's tomb.

Portugal, p. 41

'Twill trickle to his rival's bier.

Introduction to Marmion

Are these thy triumphs? this thy proudest aim?

P. 25.

Then, fathering verse by nobler Poets writ,
(An ample Plagiarist, tho' half-form'd Wit)

NOTES.

Is this your triumph? this your proud applause?

Pleasures of Hope.

The noontide breeze that swept the peopled heath,
Had borne the shouts of thousands on its breath;
The noontide sun had seen the ardent fight
Dart back its lustre with redoubled light;
Now,—sad and silent flits the evening blast,
And the low sun-beam gilds a desert waste.

P. 67.

The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide;
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

The Lady of the Lake.

The wolf steals trembling from the mountain glade,
The fleet stag bounds from out his covert shade,

Pilfer whole lines without a blush of shame,
And gild the shred and patchwork with his name.

NOTES.

The rock-bird, startled from his nest on high,
Bends to the unwonted storm a wondering eye,
And, wildly screaming, from the dark affray,
Swift rising, heavenwards wheels his airy way.

P. 57, 58.

The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar.

Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye.

Lady of the Lake.

And, if immortal powers yet blend above
The seraph's influence with the patriot's love.

I . .

If thy blest nature now unites above
An angel's pity with a brother's love.

Pleasures of Memory.

Each frowning rock by [illegible] steps with

P. 52.

O for an Aretine*, to scourge from hence
Aristrocats, who fetter common sense;

NOTES.

Ye rugged rocks! which holy knees have worn.
Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard.

Quit'st the mild blessing to explore its cause.
P. 24.

And dulling delight, by exploring its cause.
MOORE.

But "loftier" honors and "more" noisy fame
Attend the "son" of gentle Buckingham*.
POPE.

If I have said *too much* of his lordship's poetry, I believe I have said *too little* of his titles, and hasten to give an erratum on a subject of such importance. For "Lord George Grenville," then, read "Lord George Grenville-Temple Nugent," or "Lord George Grenville-Nugent Temple," which the reader pleases.—*Sat habeo.*

——— * Ecco il flagello
De' Principi, il divin Aretino.
Orlando Furioso, can. 46. stan. 14.

So says Ariosto. See also Giambatista Chiaramonti.
Le Accademie non erano celebri, se non era l'Aretino loro

* Lord G. is son to the Marquess of Buckingham.

Chain reason down, and urge their course along,
In all the license of unmeaning song.
Where, where, shall humble Genius find retreat,
Elbowed by rhyming Peers in ev'ry street;
Who view with scorn his unobtrusive lay;
Or worse, steal from him half its praise away?
Shame on thee, Grenville! leave this wretched aim,
Nor build thy hopes upon another's fame;
Let native thoughts atone for want of skill,
Be dull, be tasteless, but be honest still.
Yet, not like Thurlow*, (name rever'd till now
For soundest judgment and unbending brow,)

NOTES.

membro. I Sovrani ed i Grandi volevano quasi per pompa nelle loro Gallerie l' effigie dell' Aretino o in medaglia o in statua o in tela.

* This nobleman has thrown before the public an imperfect poem; to which are affixed a few [illegible] wretched sonnets, (elegidia crudi dictarunt proceres) that disgraced either a

Turn general Puffer to a noble throng,
Praise Peers in sonnets, Princes in a song.

NOTES.

noble or ignoble scribbler. The following specimens may serve to illustrate:—

To the Most Noble Prince, the Duke of Dorset.

So clear *antiquity* revives in *thee*,
The living record of nobility.

To the Right Honorable the Earl Spencer.

Transcendant Lord, accept this verse from me,
Made for all time, but yet unworthy thee.

To the Right Honorable the Earl Moira.

To thee, that art the *glory* of our days,
And patron of all princely gentleness,
This image of delight my Muse conveys,
To be accepted of thy *nobleness*.
.....
Therefore, *Great Lord*, vouchsafe this book to take,
Both for its *own* and for its *author's* sake.

He,—witless Lord! for Dorset labors hard,
For Spencer, Moira, Holland, and Granard:

NOTES.

To the Right Honorable Lord Holland.

Most favored Lord, in whose pure intellect,
(The Temple of divine Humanity,)
Th' eternal Muse's triumph with *affect*
Of all that lives above the *lamping* sky.

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Granard.

Yet may I not my thankful labours cease,
Till this *sweet work* in part I dedicate
To you, *Heroick Lord*, in War or Peace
The equal *grace* and *glory* of our State.

May it not reasonably be anticipated, that in some future age, if a copy of this should then be extant, it would prove a more difficult undertaking to explain, than even Commentator encountered, for the greater part is absolutely unintelligible at the present time!

And then, the Princely Regent of these realms
With one vast stream of fustian overwhelms.

NOTES.

Lord Thurlow has undoubtedly mistaken his talents, and should rather have been

Ouvrier estimé dans un art necessaire
Qu'ecrivain du commun et poëte vulgaire.
Il est dans tout autre art des degrès differens,
On peut avec honneur remplir les seconds rangs,
Mais, dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'ecrire,
Il n'est point de degrès du mediocre au pire.

BOIL. *Art. Poet.* chant 4.

Is it to be endured that a publication like this should pass through a first edition in the course of a few months, while so many of far superior merit "rot on the mouldering shelves?" but it may easily be explained—they are not the works of "a Rhyming Peer!"

Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi. JUV. *Sat.* 3.

By the bye, if I mistake not, Lord Thurlow holds a patent place under the Chancellor, called "Clerk of the Custodies of

Are these the triumphs then that rank affords,
And these, Patricians, these your Poet Lords?
One steals remorseless, while the other strives
For ancient rhymes, and Arcadie revives.
O were it not, that some superior few
Still onward press with glory in their view,
And still the splendor of their height sustain,
How weak were Birth! Nobility how vain!

Lo! next, ambitious Wharton* fain would share
The Politician's and the Poet's care:

NOTES.

Idiots and Lunatics in possession." In "The Battle of Hexham" a Corporal says to *his* troop:—"Know yourselves for a parcel of Fools, and I'm at the head of you."

* Of "Roncesvalles," which is the title of the Epic Poem that the Secretary to the Treasury has presented to the world, with all the advantages of being printed on wire-wove paper—dedicated to a Princess of the Blood Royal—and decorated with a dainty Print of Urganda seated on the summit of a Volcano, and enve-

First, from the Treasury Benches would demand
The " Ways and Means " of this so gifted land.
Then from the World retired, in happier hours
Woo the soft Muses in Aonian bowers;
Ask from their hands the " Ways and Means " to form
An Epic glowing from his Fancy warm.
The Poem finished:—the impatient Bard
Seeks from the world a Poet's great reward;

NOTES.

loped with clouds—it will not be difficult to predict, that, like the Arthur of Blackmore, the Davideis of Cowley, the Moses or the Deborah of Parnell, it will never be read beyond the first fifty lines. Mr. Wharton has taken his materials chiefly from Berni's Rifaccimento of L'Orlando Innamorato of Boyardo, and the Morgante Maggiore of Pulci, although it is only to the former of these that he makes due acknowledgement. But the embellishments of imagination, the harmony of measure, and the propriety of versification, are peculiarly his own. So peculiarly, indeed, that however uncertain I may be as to whether he feel much honored by the profit, of this I am sure, that the " honor profiteth him nothing."

Thinks that his task's complete; that even now
Homerian laurels fall to deck his brow.
Vain hope! The Magic, in his line imprest,
Distilled its venom thro' his lab'ring breast;
And, when he fancied Inspiration smiled,
Dulness alone each slumb'ring sense beguiled:
Arm'd with Urganda's pow'r, above his head
She took her station, poised on wings of lead,
That dead'ning fanned the energies of mind,
And left each charm of Poesy behind.
Then, from the brain, the Epic Monster sprang,
And all Parnassus startled at the clang!

Now Judgment frowns, as o'er the rugged lay
'Mid pilfer'd scenes she struggling holds her way;
And, once again, finds Ariosto's line,
Where Fiends, and Spells, and Chivalry combine:
Sees brave Orlando, stung to deeds of shame,
In Folly live, in Death regain his fame.
But then the age the Bard's excuse might plead,
And wing'd Invention consecrate the deed;

Now, when the times no fictious tale require,
When e'en the tale can boast no Poet's fire,—
Will dull'd Conception ponder o'er the line,
Where Blackmore's sense and Hayley's metre join?
Strange mania! that the pamper'd sons of ease,
Who rise from pow'r to pow'r by due degrees,
Should, far from danger, in its scenes delight,
And dream of what they ne'er beheld—a fight!
E'en Croker loves in poesy to kill,
Tho' "half the business of the world stand still."
He sings, while all, to foreign wars who roam,
Are sacrificed to Battles fought at home.
At home? Yes—trained like Addison to wield
The ministerial sword and pond'rous shield,
Still Nereus Croker* spouts forth Paper prose
To whelm the host of Opposition foes;

NOTES.

The letters in the Courier signed "Nereus," are attributed to Mr. Croker.

And Vict'ry's losses strives to reimburse,
By turning Wellington's Despatch * to verse!
Say, who is he† that vainly hopes to move
By adding Crusoe to a tale of love;

NOTES.

* See "Talavera," a Poem by J. W. Croker, Esq.

† Redeunt Saturnia Regna! the reign of nonsense and Della Crusca is returned; and it will require more than the hand of a Gifford to crush this modern Antæus. That Mr. Wilson is a worthy member of the "Cruscan Fraternity" may be seen by the following extracts from "a non-descript, called the Isle of Palms," to which he has prefixed his name:

The *tiniest* boat that ever sailed
"Might through this sea, *without a fear*,
Her silent journey take."....
....
"How *like a monarch* would she glide,
While the *hush't billows kiss'd* her side
With low and lulling tone."....
"List how in *murmurs of delight*
The *blessed airs* of Heaven invite
The *joyous bark* to pass one night:

With half-drawn metaphor and fond conceit,
And verse that halts upon uneven feet,

NOTES.

Within their still domain.
O grief! that yonder *gentle moon*,
Whose smiles for ever fade so soon,
Should waste such smiles in vain."

These wild and melancholy eyes
Are dear unto the *starred skies*,
As the *dim effusion* of their rays
Blends with the *glimmering light* that plays
O'er the *blue heavens* and snowy clouds,
The *cloudlike sails* and *radiant shrouds*.

Cloudlike sails; anglice, Canvass—and Radiant Shrouds; Hemp, with a little coal tar.

" O world of waters! the steadfast earth
Ne'er lay entranced like thee."

" For long, in sooth, he strove,
When the waters were booming in his brain,
And his life was clogged with sickening pain,
To save his Ladylove."

Who tells, how *tiny boats like Monarchs glide,* 235
While, *with low tone, hush'd billows kiss their side;*

NOTES.

Long, in sooth, he might; but, one more quotation, and that one!!!

As the sky where she soars were a world of her own,
She mocketh the gentle mighty one
As he lies in his quiet mood.
" Art thou," she breathes, " the tyrant grim
That scoffs at human prayers,
Answering with prouder roaring the while,
As it rises from some lonely isle,
Through groans raised wild the hopeless hymn
Of shipwrecked mariners?"

Guess, gentle reader! who it is that speaks! No less a personage than the Moon " singing in her bliss," and addressing herself, in this dismal ditty, to the

—— waves that lend their gentle breast
In gladness, for her couch of rest!

" Cedite Graii, cedite Romani scriptores!"

" And say what wanteth now the Isle of Palms?"

" It wanteth sense, and taste, and every thing but rhyme."

And *blessed airs* and *gentle Moon* invite,
With smiles, *a joyous bark* to pass a night

NOTES.

Shades of Laura Maria, Carlos, Reuben, Orlando, and Adelaide, if your mellifluous strains still illumined the Oracle, how would each "blue stocking bard" exult, and "shake his empty noddle at a brother," in the anticipation of excellence which promises to surpass your whole choir? And yet this is the magnus Apollo of the Edinburgh Reviewers; this is the Poem which they think "will afford great delight to those who are most capable and most deserving of being delighted." They indeed add, "there are none whom it will not sometimes dazzle with its glare, and sometimes weary with its repetitions."

I wish, for the sake of consistency, that this learned Body, who have come forward as Arbiters of the Public Taste, had been more moderate in the praise they have bestowed upon this tissue of absurdities; as, I much fear, it will excite a belief in the minds of those, who still remember their unmerciful treatment of poor Montgomery, that there is a mode of appeal to their tribunal, of which ordinary readers have very little suspicion.

From the tone of apparent candour which they contrive to blend with the acrimony of their strictures, there are many, no

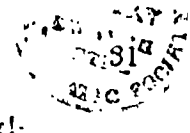
Within their still and silvery domain,
But waste (poor creatures!) all their smiles in vain!

NOTES.

doubt, who conceive them to be actuated by a spirit of fair and liberal criticism. By these it will be heard with surprise, that the Oracle of Jeffrey delivers its "fata" in a manner not very dissimilar to that of the Delphic Apollo. A secret influence behind the curtain directs the operations, and an insolent affectation of sincerity covers the imposture. With the same blind and stupid adoration are its edicts received by those who are dazzled by the pomp of an apophthegm and the splendour of declamation. At this moment, the words of Horace seem prophetic, and intended for a Reviewer North of the Tweed.

——" quâ pauper aquæ Daunus agrestium
Regnavit populorum, *ex humili potens.*"

Before I conclude the subject, I would inquire of the Rev. Sydney Smith, if Le Maitre's mimicry of a certain Lecturer at the Royal Institution had any share in pointing the acumen which assailed Le Maitre's Travels; and what was the nature of the private quarrel, which left so bitter a remembrance behind, as to influence the Reviewer in his notice of Dr. Parr's Sermon? I



'Tis Wilson! Master of the pretty song!-
Though something, nothing; and tho' little, long;

NOTES.

would also ask that "smooth-tongued" Patriot, Mr. Brougham, if Dr. Currie's Biography of Burns offended him more than Dr. Currie's conduct at Liverpool? Mr. Jeffrey, perhaps, can inform me, whether Coppleston's witty pamphlet (Hints to a Young Reviewer) was the provocation which drew forth the tirade against Oxford, and the clubbing of his wit with that of the Rev. S. Smith and Richard Payne Knight, Esq. for the overloaded abuse of that Professor;—if the only sermons he ever noticed without damning were not those of his own brother-in-law;—and what meaning he intended to convey, when he returned a review of Shepherd's Life of Poggio*, saying: "*It had not pepper and salt enough?*" Further, it may afford some satisfaction to know, if the Edinburgh Review be the only publication over which Mr. Pillans has sufficient control, to procure the insertion of a favorable critique of the very indifferent Themes of his own Scholars, and consequent praise of their worthy Preceptor.

---

* Their own account of that very book was replete with errors, detected by Shepherd in the Monthly Magazine.

Who, with success, attempting to impart
The worst of Nature to the worst of Art,
Rakes, what had best been buried, into day,
And culls the weeds that Taste had thrown away.
Still, Wilson, moonstruck, sing of Moons once more,
For ev'ry sleeping child let there be *four*;
New tales of shipwreck'd Guinea-pigs rehearse,
Or paint the India Company in verse;
Secure, if English Critics idly frown,
Your Scottish Friends shall write the blockhead down;
With *unbought* praise shall bid your works remain,
And render Pope's and Johnson's censure vain *.

NOTES.

* See Martinus Scriblerus, and Johnson's Life of Cowley; where these great men have (without reading the E. R., I suppose) expressed a pretty decided opinion upon the merits of the school of which Mr. Wilson is a successful imitator.

Mark, scarce emerging from the wordy war,
The "tuneful Swan*" of Boswell, Heard, and Parr;
Who dar'd, like Icarus, to soar on high
Too near the Sun that warms our northern sky:
But, ah! unable to support the blaze
Which shot in splendor from its vivid rays,
With failing pinion sank into the sea
That ebbs upon the gulf of dark obscurity.
When *kind* Malone had ceas'd to blast his fame,
For sixteen years th' Impostor pin'd in shame;

NOTES.

* It is not so extraordinary that this Swan should have attained such a height, when we consider his borrowed plumage, as that so many Veteran sportsmen should be deceived by his appearance in the wide field of Letters. We now see him stripped of his additional feathers, and it is truly a sorry bird without them. To drop the metaphor; after what has been written and said about this *ingenuous* Youth and his forgeries, the Reader would assuredly not have met with him here, but for a late attempt to draw the attention of the Public to a name, which the privacy of retirement can alone screen from contempt.

And now, "Neglected Genius*" greets the sight,
Starts from the shade, and dares alone the light.
No Genius here for Ireland's Muse to claim
'Mid England's Minstrels a distinguish'd name,
And, spite of all, this offspring of his skill
Will, like its Author, be neglected still.

What glittering page†, with every gay design,
Now lies as incense on the Paphian shrine?

NOTES.

* "Neglected Genius," a Poem by W. H. Ireland, will explain this allusion.

† The prominent features in Mr. Spencer's style are here detailed: "Numeris decor est et unctura addita crudis." He has published some "Poems," and likewise a Translation from the "Lenore" of Bürger, with designs by Lady Diana Beauclerk. Of this Ballad I think a great deal more has been said than it deserves. It has already met with four translations in the English Language: but the German, of whose style "simplicity is the characteristic," as Mr. Spencer rightly observes, "looks like Tom Errand drest in Clincher's clothes," in the fine tawdry

Who lauds the blooming graces of the Town?
Who "pillows joy on softest, smoothest down*?"

NOTES.

suit of English embroidery which Mr. S. has provided for him. It sits awkwardly on the Bard of Aschersleben, whose own homely dress peeps here and there through the lace that envelopes it. To be serious, Mr. S. has refined away all the beauty of the Original. If Bürger merely says: "It is a fine star-light night," his Translator instantly transforms it into a conceit—to the proof:

—— bis sonnenuntergang,
Bis auf am Himmelsbogen
Die golden Sterne zogen:

which is literally thus: "Till the sun went down, and the golden stars appeared in the vault of Heaven:" now see the translation.

Till westward sunk the car of light,
And countless stars in air were hung
To gem the matron weeds of night.

* To smooth Reflection's mentor frown,
And pillow Joy on softer down.
SPENCER'S *Poems.*

Wreathes Erato with flow'rets, and refines 275
With "limæ labor" all his polish'd lines?

NOTES.

Lady Diana Beauclerk has been led into a whimsical error by this desultory mode of translation.

Bürger, when describing Leonora mounting behind the Spectre, makes use of these words:

Schön Liebchen schürzte, sprang und schwang
Sich auf das Ross behende;
Wohl um den trauten Reiter schlang
Sie ihren lilienhände:

which are thus rendered:

Loose was her zone, her breast unveil'd,
All wild her shadowy tresses hung;
O'er fear confiding love prevail'd,
As lightly on the barb she sprung.

Now the meaning of the two last lines in the German is omitted; and, as the three first in English are entirely expletive, the fair Artist, in representing Leonora un peu en deshabillé, has been employing her pencil to illustrate, not Bürger, but Mr. Spencer.

Misguided Spencer! wherefore wouldst thou gain
The short renown of an ephem'ral strain;
Flutter awhile in realms of Taste, and be
A Petit-Maitre even in Poesy?
True, that before, with all the Teian's fire,
Moore soar'd in regions of unblest desire;
His lays, like thine, had every charm of art,
But then they spoke the language of his heart:
Bright emanations of a feeling soul,
Victim to Passion's unrestrained control.
Own then, it is not all to rhyme with ease,
And sing of something, or—for ever cease.

NOTES.

Mr. S. in his Preface (for every thing now has a Preface) talks of risking the "contest" with Mr. Pye, another Translator, for the honor of this paltry ballad. This is "much ado about nothing," with a vengeance. "It is impossible," said Dr. Johnson, on a similar occasion of contested honors, "to settle the point of precedence between a flea and a louse."

Yet, yet, leave Bürger's legendary lore,
Nor add new tales to Mother Bunch's store;
From nothing*, nothing ever can proceed,
And what, in German, nonsense is decreed,
Will still be nonsense to an English view,
In spite of Critics, Wits, and Ladies too.
But surely then, those Critics must decide
By some false principle, some adverse guide,
Who grant the same applause to both extremes,
And honor Crabbe's as well as Spencer's themes.
Spencer, with labor forms his easy strain,
Soften'd by art, and fashion'd by the brain;
As ductile gold†, without the aid of fire,
Is drawn and lengthen'd into finest wire.

NOTES.

* ——— gigni
De nihilo, nihilum, &c. PERSIUS, *Sat.* 3.

† Et son vers froid, mais poli, bien tourné,
A force d'art, rendu simple et facile,
Ressemble au trait d'un or pur et ductile,
Par la filière, en glissant, façonné. MARMONTEL.

Just so much art does tedious Crabbe* bestow,
To roughen what can scarce be said to flow;

NOTES.

* Mr. Crabbe is chiefly known to the Public by his "Borough" and "Village Tales," of which it can only be said, that, if they please at all, they please rather by their novelty than by their subjects, or the style in which they are written. The attempt† to describe the common occurrences in a low station of life, with all the graces of Poetry, was certainly bold; and, if it had not been carried to excess, might probably have succeeded. But Mr. Crabbe, like the Actors in the Critic, would "never have enough of a good thing;" and so

A Carman's Horse could not pass by,
But stood tied up to Poetry;
No Porter's *burthen* passed along
But served for burthen to his song.

HUDIBRAS.

† The following observations, from a French Classic, appear to me so admirable, that I cannot refrain from quoting them on the present occasion. "La Poésie doit toujours montrer une sorte d'invention, donner par des *fictions neuves* un esprit de vie à tout ce qu'elle touche, et ne pas oublier que, suivant Simonide, la poésie est une peinture parlante comme la peinture est une poésie muette." Il suit de là que le vers seul ne constitue pas le poëte." *Voyage du Jeune Anacharse.*

To break a hemistich, to pun in rhyme,
And shun whatever might appear sublime.
From Peleus' Son he brings the Muses back
To homely Roger, and familiar Jack!
And leaves "the flowery phrase of fairy land"
For all the flowery phrases of the Strand!

The younger Coleman* too, with hot-pressed page
And spreading quarto, profits by the age,

NOTES.

Disgusted with a continued repetition of common-place incidents and pot-house stories, the Reader is compelled to run the gauntlet through a long succession of rural Heroes, whose names and qualifications are described with a gravity, that is perfectly ludicrous. Added to this, Mr. Crabbe makes frequent use of that figure of speech called the Paranomasia, or Pun; where, as Pope says, "a word, like the tongue of a jackdaw, speaks twice as much by being split." With this excellent qualification, and an affected harshness of versification, Mr. Crabbe's style is become

—— a kind of hobbling prose,
That limps along, and tinkles at the close.

* If a young man were to degrade himself by writing a lewd

Draws on the name a gifted Sire bequeath'd,
Whose nervous line the power of knowledge breathed,

NOTES.

song or a loose tale, he would be regarded with mingled feelings of pity and contempt; but when a man, no longer in the "heyday of youth," but rather descending in the vale of years, insults the world with indecencies, either in verse or prose, he should share the fate of Cleveland, and be held up to universal reprobation. Such I am compelled to say, has been the conduct of George Coleman the Younger. It is currently reported and believed, that the inducement was a considerable sum of money, offered to him by Mr. Elliston for the Copy-right of his Work (the Lady of the Wreck, &c.) This is, however, at the best, but a sorry apology for one whose talents had before placed him high in the rank of Dramatic Writers. Mr. C. is now preparing, as I have been informed, a poetical reply* to the different Reviews.

* In the interval between writing and publishing this Poem, Mr. Coleman's reply has appeared, and, indeed, surpassed my expectations. What must the principles of that man be, who defends indecency upon the plea, that those who understand its allusions have learnt nothing but what they were before acquainted with, and those who do not understand them, can receive no injury from their publication!

And thrusts, with dauntless air, upon the Town,
Things called " Poetical " by him alone.
True, they are hitched in verse, and to his aid
He calls Euphrosyne, " celestial Maid!"
Not *she*,—who erst th' inspired Minstrel blest,
Swell'd ev'ry movement of his guileless breast,
And danced, before his Fancy kindled eye,
In all the glories of effulgency!
But *she*,—whose coarser mien and looser tongue
Prompted the quibbles Peter's lyre hath sung;—
Who hover'd round his jest-distilling quill,
Moulding each couplet to her sovereign will.
E'en now she waits thee, Bard of punning race!
With smiling eye, and triumph-beaming face;

NOTES.

For myself, I cannot see by what means he will do away their remarks upon the objectionable passages, or free himself from the stigma they have thrown upon his character.

And, from her hand, she bids thee humbly take
A wreath of weeds, and wear it for her sake.
But think, when "ages yet unborn" shall look
Full on the wonders of the "Guinea" Book;
From thine own tale they there may chance to learn,
That "low desires in ev'ry bosom burn:"
Then shall the truth appear in plainest guise,
And show distinctly the long sought for prize;
Then shall they deem the "low ambition" thine,
The Prince of rhyming ribaldry to shine.
Say, should the lash Satiric weakly miss
A Bard so weak, a strain so gross as this;
Where rank obscenity holds place of wit,
Unmeet for sight, for brothels only fit;—
And, passing by, let Vice hold on her course,
Nor scourge the Parodist with keenest force?
No, surely not; while Virtue's cause can fire
The Censor's wrath, the Muse's kindling ire!
Shade of the Senior! in these worthless days,
The Son,—forgetful of a Father's bays,

That else had twin'd with vigour round his head,
And twofold honor by descent had shed;—
Forgetful of Society's applause,
That soon or late will vindicate her laws;—
Profanes the talents that a bounteous Heav'n,
To one, unworthy of the trust, had giv'n;
And prompts his jaded fancy to excite
Wit unrefin'd, and mirth without delight.

Yet, when the verse Posterity shall see,
That violates the rules of Decency,
'Twill justly spurn the Author of the deed,
And, "viva voce," cry: "This, Coleman, be thy meed:—
With Pasquin's join'd, and Peter Pindar's* name,
(A matchless trio in the lists of Fame,)

NOTES.

* Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,
And if it rarely, very rarely, hits,

Thine shall remain, when e'en the worthless lay
That rais'd thee there, like their's have passed away;
Then shall it meet alone, of merit lorn,
The frown of Virtue, and the sneer of Scorn!"

What daring hand* has seized the trembling lyre,
Flushed with the hopes of all a Poet's fire,
To sing thee, Woman! lovely, gentle, kind,
And paint the wonders of thy form and mind!
Here was a theme to warm the kindling Muse,
And all the energies of song infuse.

NOTES.

'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid,
To find it out 's the cinder-woman's trade,
Who for the wretched remnants of a fire,
Must toil all day in ashes and in mire.
So lewdly dull his idle works appear,
The wretched Texts deserve no comment *here.*

DRYDEN and MULGRAVE'S *Essay on Satire.*

* Eaton Stannard Barrett, Esq. has published what he is pleased to call a Poem on Woman, "Vox et preterea nihil!"

Here was a theme to bid the mounting soul,
On Fancy's wings, ascend beyond control.
Now,—when the strain should rise, and loud, and high,
In all the swell of noblest Minstrelsy,—
The tinkling chords emit discordant sound,
And harshest notes disturb the air around.
Barrett! 'twas thine, to touch the jarring strings,
And thine the soul that Fancy never wings.
Then, stay thy hand, Pretender! hence, away!
Nor round Parnassian Bowers presume to stray;
The Muse disclaims thee, while th' indignant Fair
Repulse the lay, unworthy of their care.
Enough of metaphor;—and tho' we're told*,
(In sooth a curious caution to unfold,)

NOTES.

* We are kindly informed in the preface, that it is not a theoretical but a practical essay, and does not require a knowledge of either Spinoza, Leibnitz, or Bolingbroke.

Mais tout esprit n'est pas composé d'une étoffe,
Qui se trouve taillée à faire un Philosophe:

That if we venture to peruse the Book,
We shall not need, or Hobbes, or Bolingbroke,
Or any such,—for smooth the path and clear,
Plain to the mind, harmonious to the ear;
Vainly he'll search, who looks the volume through,
For flowing numbers or conceptions true.
There, stately jargon dins the aching head*,
And pretty see-saws move with measured tread;

NOTES.

ard Mr. Barrett's craniology would have puzzled Dr. Gall, if I may judge from a contemplation of his mentes penetralia.

* The first four lines are a very fair specimen of the whole, and a beautiful instance of the jargon. To wit:

"Young, and enamour'd of a youthful theme,
I sing the sex opprest by man supreme,
Opprest by *bards*, who first *its* heart revile,
Then *sleek* the *dittied sonnet* on *its* smile."

"What a noble confusion!" and again, the beginning of the last book:

"Yes, woman, gentle Woman, all inspires,
Let man tyrannic call his *awful fires*;—
His *awful fires* let man tyrannic call,
Yet woman, gentle Woman, con juers all," &c. &c.

Proverbs in rhyme*, quaint sayings without end,
And labored thoughts† their potent magic lend.

NOTES.

" Immutual natures make commutual hearts ;"

meaning

—— " thus they say
Meek natures fierce prefer, and solemn gay,
Brown glances, eyes of azure tinct approve,
And jetty tresses shining flaxen love."
Tum to ti ti—Tum ti ti.

* Proverbs sufficient for another Book.

" Men domineer—age ails—and children die," &c.

" Better oft love, than never love a maid,
Better than never trust, be oft betrayed."

" The lover manners, morals make the spouse."

" Who rules when courted, when obtained obeys."

" Late ties conform not, nor unequal years,
And marriage premature, concludes in tears."

† Of these an abundance—Woman is

" Sum and exemplar of the plan divine."

Oh! if the axiom that thy line imparts,
Barrett! be true, " weak heads have fickle hearts:"

NOTES.

" Last of creation, best of all create."

" Fair peril—despot dear"

her only enemies—The Libertine, the Pedant, and the Clown; with

" Thou, whom maidens woman-hater call,
Some lep'rous miscreant art thou loath'd of all,
Form'd to blaspheme all human, all divine,
And drug with poison sacramental wine:"

and him he bids

" On *hissing* keel the *huge* Atlantic ride,
Lur'd by Potosin gold."

To suckle is

" To *crush* a rill ambrosial from thy breast."

Speaking of a mother who had been overwhelmed in a house by an earthquake, he says:

" Till her dear baby with imploring sounds
Complains, and presses unreplenish'd *rounds*."

This will at least afford " the sons of men,"
The hope, in rhyme, to meet thee ne'er again;
But should this hope, (as chance it will) prove vain,
And thou renew once more the votive strain,

NOTES.

And then, to set herself free,

" She scrapes the *gritty wall* with *bleeding* nails," &c.

To extract from Mr. Barrett's " *Poem* " all that is either tedious or ridiculous, would be to transcribe the whole.

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But (Barrett) never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But (Barrett's) genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.

DRYDEN'S *M'Flecknoe*.

Mr. B. finishes his preface with a hope that he shall not murmur if he be condemned to the meaner office of compressing the ringlets of the fair. He may really think himself happy if he do not compress butter and cheese.

Yet hear this friendly counsel ere we part:—
Get Blackstone, Burns, and Lyttleton by heart;
Stick to the statutes, study England's laws,
Nor quit *good suits*, but for a *better cause:*
So shalt thou thrive, nor aim inspir'd to sing
Save the old song, "Pleas of our Lord the King!"

If these the fruit of Learning's vain parade,
Rise, Education! for we need thine aid.
Rise, Education! on the wings of mind,
Or wings which Bell and Lancaster* can find;

NOTES.

* Th' invention all admir'd, and each how he
To be th' inventor miss'd, so easy it seem'd
Once found, which, yet unfound, most would have thought
Impossible. MILTON.

I do not mean to enter into the separate merits of Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster's systems; but, whether the former have a just claim to priority or not, I think the latter has been treated in an unfair, and often in an ungentlemanly manner, by men whose profession ought to have taught them liberality.

Smooth the rough path to adjectives and nouns,
Make Commentators of our very clowns,
Inform all ranks, and wake to second birth
The soul that slumbers in each mass of earth!
Yet, ere thy splendour have dispell'd the night,
And cleans'd the film from ev'ry mortal sight,
Stay the rude clamour which denies thee praise,
Impedes thy progress and thy hope delays;
Which bids thee even friendly aid reject,
That might, perchance, add influence to a sect,
And, too desirous to reform the nation,
Make Quakers of the rising generation.
For such the cry, which, feebly rais'd at first,
On Cam's smooth side from stern Professors* burst;

NOTES.

* Dr. Herbert Marsh, F. R. S. and Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, the firm opposer of Joseph Lancaster, and all who have the misfortune to differ from the Professor in opinion. He is an able controversialist, but rather too fond of

Then, as its echo, faintly borne along,
Swell'd by the voices of a mitred throng,
With the warm impulse of mistaken zeal
Would clog with party, what the world should feel.

While these the mists of prejudice explore,
Few "scent the tainted gale from Gallia's shore*."

NOTES.

the "distinction without a difference." (See his Pamphlets on the Bible Societies.)

* The circumstances here alluded to are so atrocious, that I can hardly mention them with any degree of temper; but

> I will not be myself, nor have cognition
> Of what I feel, I am all patience.
>
> TROIL. *and* CRESS.

Pierre le Courayer, a Foreigner of the Romish Church, inclining in some points to Protestantism, is denounced by the Ecclesiastical Authorities of his Country, and, with the tremendous

Reviewers, fond of dubious knowledge grown,
Add to the sceptics' arguments, their own.
Bell, too, Socinus' free disciple loves,
And madly edits what he disapproves;

NOTES.

ban of excommunication upon his head, takes refuge in England. He is there received "with great kindness and hospitality," and finally admitted into the highest circles, with the warmest spirit of liberality. In habits of intimacy with many respectable characters, and beneath the protecting shadow of the Throne, he meditates an attack upon the sacred truths of the Gospel. His work is received, without distrust, by a Princess of the Blood Royal, and (hear it, Posterity!) a Dignitary of the Church gives the sanction of his name to a production, which appears to be a libel upon the Articles of his Faith, and an insult to that Church of which he is a member! Still more:—The Critical Reviewers defend the arguments of the Work, and the character of its Author; and add their "all-sufficient suffrage" to the cause of Unitarianism. But, Courayer still remains unanswered, Dr. Bell meets with no reproof, and the sale of the Critical Review is in nowise decreased by this open avowal of Deistical sentiments. O tempora!

With fatal candour saves the latest breath
Of hoary Arians, on the verge of death,
To blast th' eternity that Hope design'd,
And ward the arm of mercy from mankind!

Yet, 'tis but just, — a pious, grave divine,
May surely now and then his cares resign;
May leave of souls th' unprofitable cure,
For tasks more sweet, and profits far more sure.

Or grant the Public's superstitious fears
Forbid to pay the *Printer's "long arrears,"*
The Doctor's kindness yet more strongly shows,
Who ventures thus these tenets to disclose,
And risks at once the censure of the Town,
The loss of Friends, of Benefice, of Gown.

Thus far I've wander'd from my gen'ral plan,
Rose, from the follies, to the faults of Man,

And shall I then recede; nor raise th' alarm*
Against the efforts of an impious arm,

NOTES.

* It had been supposed, and perhaps with some reason, that the age of Infidelity had passed away; that the virulent attacks of a Volney and a Paine had perished with the insidious attempts of a Voltaire and a Rousseau; that Religion had no longer any enemies to fear but her own children; and that her danger now arose, not so much from sceptics as from sectarians. It was reserved for Sir W. Drummond and his precursor in the paths of doubt and danger, (M. Dupuis,) to rouse once more the dormant embers to a flame, that, but for them, had died comparatively harmless and unknown.

M. Dupuis published, at Paris, in 1795, "Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion universelle," and "Memoire explicatif du Zodiaque Chronologique et Mythologique;" both of which have been fortunately but little read in this country. I say fortunately; for it is the tendency of the mind, however glaring the errors, or absurd the arguments to which it may be exposed in the examination of an attack upon long-received truths, to imbibe a forcible remembrance of the assertions that have tended to ridicule or controvert those truths; and which, although they may have

That fain would shake the Fabric to its base, 455
Rais'd as the monument of endless grace!

NOTES.

failed to convince, have still left an impression rarely or never to be effaced.

Sir W. Drummond, in furtherance of the "grand projet," has printed and circulated, amongst his friends and others, a work entitled "Œdipus Judaicus," in which he endeavours to prove, that the histories contained in the sacred writings of the Hebrews are astronomical types, and that the prophecies are merely allusions of the same nature. Unlike most of those, who have, at different times, aimed at subverting the Holy Authorities, he does not, for so he says, wish to disprove them, but to make it appear that they have been handed down to us by our forefathers, not in their primitive signification, but changed in the process of time to the interpretation they now bear! How aptly do the words of Lord Bacon upon the speculative Philosophers of the 16th century, apply to those of the present day: "Certainly," says he, "there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free will in thinking as well as in acting; and though the sect of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain *certain discoursing Wits*, which are of the same

Ah! do I feel my pow'rs too weak to rise
In such a cause, to strengthen and advise;

NOTES.

veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients."

That Sir W. Drummond has not succeeded, is more to be attributed to the fallibility of his purpose than to the weakness of his endeavours; for in support of his argument, as well as in display of his learning, he has quoted Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Persic, Arabic, Syriac, and the Fathers of the Romish Church, by turns.

——good lost, and evil got,
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know.

In one point of view this excess of learning is undoubtedly fortunate, as it cannot now so rapidly "spargere voces in *vulgum ambiguas;*" in another it is bad, as urging those who understand just sufficient of a language to comprehend the sense of a quotation, without examining the strength of the assertion connected with it, to embrace and subscribe to a creed that dazzles by its seeming depth of research, and pleases by its novelty and singularity. The Rev. G. D'Oyley, Christian Advocate in the University

Or must I shrink because the dangerous blow
Comes doubly arm'd with Learning's pomp and show?
Shall rank protect, shall elevation skreen,
Or age step in the crime and me between?

NOTES.

of Cambridge, has replied to it in virtue of his office, but has at times treated his adversary too cavalierly, and his argument too contemptuously. This was not the course adopted by the present excellent Bishop of Llandaff, in his admirable answer to the gross vulgarity and horrid impiety of Paine; and it is to his exertions, rather than to the iron hand of the law, that I attribute the almost total extinction of that man's works.

But Sir W. Drummond is a very different character, and in matters of mere temporal interest, his authority would have the greatest weight. Many there are, who having little to hope, and therefore much to fear, will gladly acquiesce in the accommodating doctrine that renders them independent of beings of a superior order. By them the warning voice should be heard in all its terrors:

——Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.
Fænum habet in cornu! Hor. *Sat.* 2.

No, surely not; yet 'tis not force will win,
But keen reproach, th' offender from his sin.
Where shall he fly, O Drummond! for relief,
Chang'd from his faith, and weak in unbelief,
Who sees the hour, ah! more than sad, draw near,
In terrors clad, encompass'd round with fear?
Say, can he turn to thee? Canst thou impart
Or strength, or comfort, to a coward heart?
Canst thou give courage in the time of need,
Or prop the falling with a broken reed?
Ah! no,—too late he 'll find he owes to thee,
(Worst, deadliest foe to poor Humanity)
All that he suffers now; to thee alone,
By thee perverted, and by thee undone.

Then, Drummond, pause—while yet the power 's thine own,
Nor leave repentance till the hour be flown;

Think while thou may'st, nor dare again to err.
If this be vain,—remember Rochester*! 480

NOTES.

* In the following note, it must not be supposed there is any allusion to Sir W. Drummond's private character, as I am, upon that point, completely uninformed. It is to his public principles I would object, and their dangerous tendency.

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, as celebrated for his splendid talents as for his abandoned character, perished in the flower of his age; a victim to intemperance and dissipation. A cotemporary of Hobbes, he had early in life been seduced by the pernicious doctrines of that writer. Happily at a later period he became acquainted with Bishop Burnet, by whom an account of his conversion was left behind; "which," as Johnson observes, "the critic ought to read for its elegance; the philosopher for its argument; and the saint for its piety." The Earl of Rochester, upon his death-bed, thus concluded his recantation:—"For the benefit of those whom I may have drawn into sin by my example, and as the greatest testimony of my charity to them, I warn them in the name of God, as they regard the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to defy his being or his providence, or to despise his goodness; no more to make a mock of sin, or condemn the

Now will I hence again retrace my path,
Nor seek Religion's foes to fire my wrath.
Foes of another kind are mine to choose,
The foes of Sense, and outcasts of the Muse.
Appear, "dread Anarch!" then, in ev'ry form
Thy self-created essence loves to warm:
Not more my theme, when, with thy spirit full,
Nods the momentum of a Witling's scull,
Than, when, with murd'rous hand and torpid pow'rs,
The Commentator o'er his victim low'rs.
Hold! whence arose this commentating rage*?
This fell consumer of the letter'd page,

NOTES.

pure and excellent religion of my ever blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of sinners, do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness."

* Among the literary excesses of the present day, there are none that have been carried to a greater excess than the rage of commentating and editing. The black-letter of antiquity from the libraries of the great and of the learned, the play-wrights of

Which, after bleeding Shakspeare* nearly dead,
On Jonson, Beaumont, Massinger hath fed,
Then prompted Weber, in one single word,
To prove his ignorance of sense and Ford;

NOTES.

a later period, and the deceased Poets of our own day, have all had their separate editors and commentators. It has now, I think, reached its nadir point; unless Mr. Weber, to his edition of the Arabian Nights in 5 vols. price 3l. 18s., and of Popular Tales, including Sinbad the Sailor, &c. &c., should add a selection for infants, (worthy his genius) and collect and comment upon Mother Hubbard and Robin Hood, &c. &c.

* The last "variorum" edition of Shakspeare exhibits his works as a beautiful ornament, defaced and patched by the attempts of those who would improve them. Jonson and Massinger have fallen into better hands; and Mr. Gifford's Massinger will be held up by future ages as a model to commentators. He has elicited the obscure passages of his author, and rejected the errors and absurdities of Coxeter and Monck Mason: in fact, he has performed for Massinger what some future editor must perform for Ford.

And show himself (what none but he will think),
Of commentating Editors—"The Pink *!"

NOTES.

* The unfortunate and palpable mistake here alluded to, is but one of an immense number that pervade the pages of Weber's "Ford:"

> The fellow 's a shrewd fellow at a pink.
> *The Lady's Trial*, Act 3. Scene 1.

Mr. Weber's note.—"Pink. It is difficult to guess at the precise meaning of this expression. Pink is used in the sense of supremely excellent, but that cannot apply here: for that reason, I strongly suspect we should read Punk!!!" Well done, Mr. Weber! supremely excellent! egad, *you're* a shrewd fellow at a Pink. Let us see how Dr. Johnson explains it.

> Pink—to pierce in small holes.

The real meaning of the sentence is now sufficiently obvious, as it was indeed before.

There is another error, if possible still more ludicrous, in which Mr. W. has altered the original text:

> Forsooth they say the king has *mowed*
> All his grey beard, instead of which is budded
> Another.

"Mowed: Old Copy, *Moved*—to mow is well known by those

And one there is, of more enlighten'd mind,
Whom 'mid this poor, this mongrel herd we find;
One, who should write with more exalted view
Than thoughts t' explain, or quibbles to renew!
Scott, "the fam'd Minstrel of Monastic Times,"
Turns Commentator too on Seward's rhymes.
Seward,—a well known name, whose lines diffuse
Just so much interest as Hayley's Muse:

NOTES.

conversant in obsolete words as meaning—to shed—and is applied chiefly to the moulting of birds—Let us again refer to Johnson:

Mew—to shed the feathers.

I should discourse of hawks, and then treat of their eyries, *mewings*, castings, and renovation of their feathers. WALTON.

The sun hath *mewed* his beams from off his lamp.
CLEVELAND.

Nine times the moon had *mewed* her horns.
DRYDEN.

This not only proves want of sense, but want of attention, as Johnson's Dictionary, with notes, is in the hands of almost every one.

Soft, smooth, and polish'd, all her numbers flow,
Sweet as her " Sweet Jar," prolix as her woe;
Yet, sometimes bursting from the tinsell'd clouds,
Whose cumb'rous ornament her genius shrouds,
She soars above her lov'd Darwinian sphere,
And hovers brilliant for a moment there.

Yet, while her numbers' general course we blame,
Languidly smooth, effeminately tame,
Tho' sometimes beaming sweetness all her own,
Each beauty feminine combined in one,—
That careless Elegance, so formed to please,
Its purport hidden in the grace of ease,—
How shall we praise the cultivated mind,
Judgment so nice, and Taste so well refin'd,
That all her letters in succession breathe,—
Claiming for her a better, brighter wreath,
Than either Montague, or grave Chapone,
Nay,—even Della Cruscan Dames shall own!

Oh say! ye Commentators who explore
The scanty phrase, or word occult of yore,—
Or to plain, broad, intelligible sense
Hold your poor light, with yet more poor pretence
To having guided Science on her way
To the bright Sun of the meridian day,—
If some crude point your Industry detect,
Some dark allusion to an unknown sect,—
By such exertions do ye hope for fame,
Or lustre equal to your Author's name?
Shall Theobald, Farmer, or discerning Reed,
Malone, or any of the num'rous breed,
Rival the Shakspeare, on whose dazzling page
They graft their errors, that a future age
May, with that Sun's divinely darting rays,
Perceive the spots that settle on his blaze!
For, Shakspeare, they shall live,—shall live by thee,
To Erostratic Immortality!
No,—for contrasted with their labor'd store,
The fire of Genius shall but blaze the more

For all, save Seward, shall beyond them live,
And all, save she, their comments long survive!

Seward reminds me, that in Darwin's* school
She learned to mourn and ornament by rule:—

NOTES.

* I forbear to make any quotations from this deceased Poet, (Dr. Darwin,) not only as it might be deemed an invidious attempt to wrest from him the few bays, which the Botanic Garden, after the prunings of an unknown and of a modern Satirist, has afforded him; but because I feel a delicacy in taking up a subject, previously so well and so admirably treated; yet as the imposing meretriciousness of a false and vitiated style of Poetry seems daily gaining ground, and likely wholly to supersede its sterling qualities,—vigor of thought, and strength of expression, by brilliant metaphor, and elaborate simile; by the incoherence of enthusiasm, and the smoothness of numbers;—I must not allow this opportunity to pass over without endeavouring to point out how directly they tend to the utter subversio of the noblest qualities of good Poetry. The polished and sounding phraseology of Dr. Darwin conceals either a paucity of ideas, or a looseness

Darwin the theorist, who strove to prove,
That worlds and systems sprang from sacred love.

NOTES.

of description: where there was little imagined, he was exuberant, that it might not appear; where he could not be concise, his luxurious redundance tended to obscure his want of strength. Perhaps there never was yet the Poet who could be less pithy than Darwin. When he is elevated by his subject to sublimity, he dwells upon it till it palls on the attention: a succession of sweets produces acidity to the palate; and it is thus, that, although his sonorous majesty may charm in the first couplet and astonish in the second, it will fatigue in the third. Preserving the same dignity and loftiness of expression through a whole Poem,—not descending to meet his situations with the varied style which they require,—his grandeur degenerates into bombast, his minuteness becomes prolixity, and his playful elegance descends into laboured absurdity. Ever too erudite to be simple, and too elaborate to be natural, the same exaggerated imagery appears through all his productions. In scenery requiring rather the rugged boldness of nature than the finished softness of art, the latter is made to predominate and the former totally to disappear: and in descriptions of simplicity he abounds with stupendous similes: like a scene badly managed, Gardens are introduced in

In his botanic page what wonders teem!
What idle Fancies of a sickly dream!

NOTES.

frightful Deserts, or frightful Deserts are exhibited in Gardens. It is this persevering incongruity, this ceaseless love of finished description, apparent in every thing that he has written, whether sentimental or didactic, sombre or lively, that will justify me in saying, "he mourns and ornaments by rule." It is the apprehension, that so specious a substitute for sense as sound, the brilliancy of verbiage for the solidity of intellect, may overcome the genuine spirit of Poetry; and in thus displacing real excellence for glittering ornament, be considered as the same proof of a national decline, as a similar failing of Poetical Talent was thought to augur to Rome, after the Age of Augustus, that has induced me to quarrel with a Writer now no more: and though it be a charitable maxim

De mortuis nil nisi bonum,

the claims of Justice and the authority of Satire are not to be sacrificed to that feeling of respect for the dead, which would dictate nothing but praise; and so long as Dr. Busby shall put forth his translation of Lucretius, we can but recollect the "fallen & not yet dead."—The Music Doctor seems a professed imitator

All Nature changes her primordial shapes,
Gods burst from eggs, and Men descend from Apes:
Bombast there raves, and with unsparing pen
Bespatters Planets, Comets, Plants, and Men.

NOTES.

of the Doctor of Medicine; and Dr. Busby may perhaps undertake a "Temple of Nature" "some day."

For the gross absurdities, the wild theories, and the extravagant speculations hinted at above, the curious reader will find them at large in the 1st vol. of the "Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life."

Of Miss Seward I should have ventured an opinion, did I not find that I had been anticipated by some able articles in recent periodical publications. She is an evident Darwinian: equally polished, but not equally majestic; perfectly as elaborate, but not so successful in ornament. This, however, is the mere failing of inability, not of disinclination. In allusion to Dr. Darwin's capacity to write as Miss Seward *could*, and Miss Seward's wish to compose as Dr. Darwin *would*; Buckingham's remark on King Charles and his brother James would not be inapplicable, thus alter'd:— I. B.

He could if he would: *she* would if she could.

Lo! here, enveloped long in Chaos dark,
The World shoots upward—from the Sun—a spark!
Another spark begets another sphere,
(And he will tell you how it fix'd, and where!)
Till sparks succeeding sparks like wildfire gleam,
Anon a planetary host to beam!—
Busby, dost ever, to translate thy Sage,
Turn to our Litchfield Deist's glowing page?
'T would save thee trouble,—for atomic laws
Here supersede th' Omnipotent First Cause;
And thy Lucretius might be proud to know
That moderns, to his verse, a Darwin owe!

'ould n soft numbers* then the praise rehearse
  ' . nslator of Lucretius' verse,

NOTES.

* Professus grandia turget.
Hor. *de Art. Poet.* 27.

Should Dr. Busby ever need a motto to his name, or his works,

Who deigns permit his softly speaking Son,
Through social circles 'plauding high to run;

NOTES.

I would, by all means, recommend this, as exemplifying both in a very eminent degree. Endued with a considerable portion of vanity, and with a very moderate share of talent, he has succeeded in drawing the attention of the town upon himself and his son. That this has not been to the advantage of either, I should think, by this time, he is perfectly sensible*; and he is now waiting with considerable impatience the appearance of his Lucretius, to efface, in some degree, the too great eclât of his own as a public orator. Of his work, and the manner in which it has been introduced to the world, I cannot refrain from saying a few words. It was first noticed in the public papers in the following manner: "The *learned and ingenious* Dr. Busby is at present employed in a translation of Lucretius." This was the puff oblique, and was continued for some time, varying at intervals:—"We are happy to inform our readers," &c. "It is with great pleasure we announce, &c. &c. to be in great forwardness." The next was

* This was written early in 1813, before the publication of Dr. Busby's Lucretius.

With outstretched arm, and voice serenely clear,
(Not to offend an honorable ear,)

NOTES.

the puff relative (or the puff of the relative) as follows:—"Mr. George Frederick Busby had the honor of reciting to a select party, different passages of his father's elegant translation, &c. &c. which will shortly be laid before the public." As the third and last gradation,—the climax of the puff,—prospectuses and proposals have been printed and circulated like a cheap shop's bill of wares all over London. Is this either honorable to his abilities, or flattering to his genius!

The Son has also a touch of the "furor scribendi," and is well known by a Serenade in the Monthly or Gentleman's Magazine, (the refuge of all milk-and-water poets, such as Messrs. Taylor, Black, Gatt, Capel Lofft, &c. &c.) and a most delicious unalogue, which, bad as it was, surpassed the monologue of his father. On his recitation I will only say,

Triste de aquel cautivo,
Que a escucharos, señor, es condenado;
Que está muriendo vivo
De veros enfadado,
Y aun [illegible] que son buenos es forzado!

D. FERNANDO de ACUÑA.

To spout the efforts of a Father's lyre,
And kindred Dulness with the sound inspire;
Then bribes some Paper of the coming day
To praise the Poet, and his flowing Lay,
Tell with what easy grace the wond'rous child
Raved thro' the Roman's classic verse, and—smiled!
Ah, hapless George! when late a British Pit
Asked from the Son a Father's *sterling* wit,
The happy youth along the Benches flew,
To bright Ambition's gilded honors true,
Sprang o'er the Orchestra, and then in haste
Close to the lamps his joyful figure placed;
Gazed round the house with well contented air,
Bowed low, and cleared his croaking throat with care;
In shape of "monologue" the effort ran,
And thus, with well-known posture he began:—

"When energizing objects men pursue,
What are the wonders that they cannot do?"—

More had he said; but, that th' increasing noise
Of praise equivocal o'erpower'd his voice.

Thrice he essayed, with powers unknown before,
But vain th' essay, the Gods would hear no more.
Forth strode the *convoyed* Hero in his ire,
Sighed o'er his inj'ries*, and condoled his Sire.
Then, shall inflated Busby lose the meed,
That shouting throngs to Bombast have decreed;
Nor, 'mid the Fools and Poetasters here,
For swelling nonsense find the proper sphere?
Full well I ken, the high exalted seat
For one like him he proudly deems unmeet.
E'en now he shines, in mind's prophetic eye,
The Cynosure of bright Poetic Sky!
And, long as Darwin's jingling style remains
The glittering model of a Poet's strains,—
[illegible] hall Busby from his verse receive
[illegible] lustre, sparkling to deceive;

NOTES.

The whole of this ridiculous scene is too well known to need [illegible] mention.

But, that once past, the laurel proves misplaced,
And He—Reviver of a *wretched taste.*

Here, while the honor of the Latian Bard
Claims deep revenge from Satire's stern award,
Imagine round the guardian Manes fly,
To watch his offspring with an anxious eye:
They turn from hence to greet a Drummond's* hand,
And mourn th' unfinish'd dress his Genius plann'd;

NOTES.

* Dr. Drummond published, some few years since, a translation of the 1st Book of Lucretius, executed with considerable spirit and accuracy. Many objections have been raised to an English version of Lucretius upon the ground of the impropriety of the 4th Book. Had the same reason been always considered valid, we never should have had a translation of some of Ovid's Metamorphoses, Juvenal's Satires, or Virgil's Eclogues. If this objection were really urged with the intention of preserving the morals of the people from contamination, and not by many, who have never seen even the title page, in the vain expectation of being

Yet still they hope, in some succeeding day,
In British garb may shine the Roman Lay,
Rescued from shame, from Busby, and the tomb,
May give a lasting wreath to Albion and to Rome!
Then, Drummond, leave to weaker, feebler hands,
To sing of rocky shores, uncertain strands.
Do thou, incited by a nobler view,
The glorious path to future fame pursue;

NOTES.

considered learned, I should be the last that would attempt to [illegible], but it has always appeared to me, independent of this, that a translation of the works of this celebrated man, at once a [illegible] and a Poet, was "a consummation devoutly [illegible] to English Literature.

Dr. [illegible] has lately written a Poem, entitled "The Grumbler," very far superior to the generality of those of the present day. The description of the sea-shore, to which I more particularly allude, is, as has been before observed, applicable either to that particular one, or any other, and, like most sea-shores, consists of waves, billows, sands, rocks, &c. &c.

Cull from the Roman every blooming flower,
Nor waste thy strength to live but for an hour.

Hark! thro' the air what mournful strains resound,
While Echo swells the failing tones around!
" Above the lyre, the lute's soft notes above,"
They tell the sorrows of misguided love:
And while, with dulcet Harmony combin'd,
They bring Youth, Beauty, Genius to the mind,
Still, still they moan, the sadden'd ear along,
In all the wildness of Funereal song.
They mourn,—that Youth is but a transient hour,
That Beauty fades like Summer's fairest flower,
That every grace of form, which men adore,
Or charm of mind, is vain—for Tighe's* no more!

NOTES.

* The late Mrs. Henry Tighe, Authoress of Psyche and other poems, published since her decease by her friends, fell a victim in 1810 to a malady, that, while it evinced the strength of her

Chaste as the Lay that chastest Reason forms,
Where Truth invigorates, and Fancy warms; 640

NOTES.

mind, could neither destroy the loveliness of her person nor the brilliancy of her talents.

Like Ossian's Morna, " she has fallen in darkness as the star in the desert, when the traveller is alone and mourns the transient beam;" but she has left a portion of her brightness behind her that never can decay.

As a model for purity of style, harmony of verse, and fertility of Imagination chastened by the hand of Reason, I should wish every female writer, who desires to excel, maturely to examine Psyche.

With the words of one of her friends, to whom the literary [illegible] is under great obligation for publishing her Poems, I will conclude: " Had these served only as the fleeting record of her destiny, and as a monument of private regret, her friends would not have thought themselves justified in displaying them to the world.—But when a Writer intimately acquainted with classical literature, and guided by a taste for real excellence, has delivered in polished language such sentiments as can tend only to encou-

Lamented Tighe! thy Psyche's magic strain
Long past this fleeting moment shall remain:
And, as the eye o'er thy pure page shall bend,
The pensive bosom will delight to blend
The Muse's sorrow with fair Psyche's tale,
And yield the sigh that cannot aught avail.
Yet, then to Joy one feeling shall be given,
When Hope shall whisper thou art flown to Heav'n.
Thy name shall live on Fame's immortal roll,
Beyond or Envy's reach, or Time's control.

How pure the flame from Glory's orb that plays,
When Virtue mingles with the Poet's praise!
Then souls, like Tighe's, with milder lustre shine,
And Taste and Feeling gild their calm decline.*

NOTES.

rage and improve the best sensations of the human heart, then it becomes a sort of duty in surviving friends no longer to withhold from the public such precious relics!"

Not this, alas! the false Enthusiast's lot*, 655
Who (all the softness of her sex forgot,

NOTES.

* I should fail in the execution of the duty I have prescribed myself, if I forbore to notice the dangerous tendency of very many of those productions which pass current among the youth of both sexes under the name of Novels.—Far from imputing to their Authors any systematic attempt, like that mentioned by the Abbé Barreul, to undermine the morals of mankind, I would only put it to their judgment, if it be not unnecessary as well as unwise to administer the poison, merely to try the effect of the antidote? Morality "comes in the cold abstract," when the passions have been inflamed by examples of successful Vice, even though the Offender be finally sentenced to condign punishment. To One Lady I particularly address myself, as her talents have raised her to an elevated situation, both in the fashionable and literary worlds. Blest with every intellectual endowment, her earliest years were devoted to the Muses; her taste, however, was indiscriminate, and she unfortunately selected for a model the most voluptuous Poet of the Senses; an imitation of whose style and sentiments was some time ago published *with her name!* The many bitter observations which that publication excited, have, no doubt, convinced her, that this was not the most

And, as her wilder Fancy, unconfin'd)
Leaves that Mimosa faculty of mind,
Which shrinks from all, but most of all, from wrong,
To frame for loose desire a looser song.
For her, no sweet remembrance lives to cheer
The close of life's anticipated year;

NOTES.

prudent course for a young female to pursue; and she has often, I dare say, exclaimed with Bonefonius:

Ite in exitium malásque flammas,
Musæ pernicies meæ juventæ.

But the open licentiousness of Little has been abandoned for the soft seduction of Rousseau. It is the emasculating tone of her Novels, the continued appeals in them to the worst feelings of Man, which have extorted this notice from me. In an age like the present, when the writings of the French *Savantes* are ushered into the world under the auspices of Fashion, it behoves us to examine with a scrutinizing eye every production which is sanctioned by its regards.—Let me, therefore, admonish this lady, that an indulgence in the faults here censured, however agreeable to the Modish Tribe, will neither add to her

Whilst not an eye but scorns her futile lore,
And not a voice is rais'd but to deplore.

Tinctur'd with all the spleen that Age imparts,
Spleen oft engender'd in the purest hearts,
Ill-omen'd Barbauld* stalks with double claim,
(Poet and Prophet, as of old, the same;)
Congenial Ravens hover in her train,
And clap their wings in concert with the strain:
Like Priam's daughter, still presaging woe,
To England's peace she strikes the fatal blow;

NOTES.

* ... hereafter, nor suggest any consolatory reflection at ... en Poetry and Prose must have an end.

*. Barbauld's merits as a writer of elementary books I am ready to bear testimony; but I cannot see purpose is likely to be answered by the publication of her "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven."—I do not, however, apprehend much danger from its predictions.—The doctrine of trans-Atlantic happiness is now pretty generally exploded; and Democracy has again failed before the test of experience.

Dims the bright glories in her orb that shine,
And gives them all, America, to thine!
To thine,—where, circled by chaotic night,
Young Genius struggles to behold the light;
Art all her stores reluctantly unfolds;
Science her ivy-garland still withholds;
And, heav'nly Poesy, those Scenes among,
More fair, more wild, than all by Poet sung,
Owns not one Votary to bless her reign,
Where Commerce steels the heart, and dulls the plodding brain.

Thanks to the Age, too wise to be deceiv'd,
The Seer's predictions ne'er will be believed!
Long, very long, ere England shall be "known
"By the grey ruin, and the mouldering stone."
Long, very long, Columbus, ere "thy world"
Shall, for its standard, see the Lion furl'd.
Soon, very soon, shall Barbauld's verse sublime,
Prove the sad truth, that all things yield to Time!

Yet, why,—forsaking plain and easy prose,
Primers and Horn-Books which could still compose,
Why wouldst thou mix among the younger throng,
Who move with lighter, livelier step along?
Then, when a purer motive bade thee write,
Content to "blend instruction with delight,"
We prais'd thy labors; but,—since now thy pen,
For higher, bolder flights assumed again,
Forebodes thy Country's ruin, and would try
To make our fancy give our eyes the lie*,—
Thy folly forces us to cry, "No more;"
And half retract the praise we gave before.

Some few years since,—when party rage ran high,
And France the word, and Freedom all the cry,

NOTES.

* .....his face loudly gives his tongue the lie.

CHURCHILL.

Three English Bards*, with hacknied logic smit,
Their native shore resolved for aye to quit;
To stem the fury of the winds and waves,
For wild Columbia's lakes, and gloomy caves.
There breathed, they said, on every hill and plain,
The Mountain-Goddess and her free-born train; 710
And there they 'd dwell beneath the sacred tree
Of ever youthful, blooming Liberty!
In sooth, 't were pity, ere the bubble burst,
By minds diseas'd and brains disorder'd nurst,
They had not flown, and kindly with them ta'en 715
Each silly smatt'rer of the Muse's train:
The "Shippe of Foolles" had borne them o'er the floods,
To awful wilds, and never ending woods;

NOTES.

* ——— for (their) ardent minds
Shaped goodliest plans of happiness on earth,
And peace and liberty.—Wild dreams!
SOUTHEY.

And there, when morn had deck'd the radiant sky,
Each, as his Genius prompted him, might fly,
In all the charms of Solitude, to rove
The wide Savannah, or the shady grove.

Southey* should roam the Lake's wild banks along,
Where Madoc, once, had strayed in fancied song:
Some Creek might teach him, ever as he went,
Legends and Fancies to his heart's content.

NOTES.

* Mr. Robert Southey is the most voluminous writer of the day, and Author of Works, Poetical, Political, Historical, Biographical, Epistolary, &c. &c.—He is undoubtedly a Poet; but his genius may be compared to the exuberance of the untrained vine, too extended to produce valuable fruit. He is, perhaps, the most rapid writer of the age, and makes it his boast to have composed one of his Epic tales (for he has written four) in the short space of six weeks.

I would my horse had the speed of (his pen),
And so good a continuer.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Then would he need no Brama's sacred lore,
Nor ransack India for one Epic more.
Coleridge* should mount some rock's o'erjutting height,
And tell his tale in accents of delight;

NOTES.

* Mr. Coleridge is well known as having produced, at divers times, a dainty volume of Poetics, and a Play, which will be honorably mentioned hereafter.—He is also a Lecturer, at the Surrey Institution, on Poetry and "les Belles Lettres." With no very prominent talents, either natural or acquired, for a public Speaker, he endeavours to supply the absence of propriety with pathos, but seldom succeeds in interesting the feelings of his auditors, till he has completely overwhelmed his own; as the following anecdote will prove:

In the course of his lecture, one evening, he had wandered from the subject matter to the story of two lovers—in the moon! So completely absorbed was he in their imaginary distresses, that he failed to observe its effect upon his hearers, until bending from his desk to make a last appeal, he saw, as well as he could through eyes suffused with tears, that they were literally laughing at him.

Constitit et lacrymans.

Fancy his seat " Apollo's forked hill*,"
The high tribunal of poetic skill;
Or Surrey's chair, in which he toil'd in vain,
While tittering students mocked the tragic strain;
And think the winds that round would gently blow
Teem'd with the praises of the crowd below.

Wordsworth† should stray adown the fragrant vale,
And breathe soft nonsense to the balmy gale;

NOTES.

* " Proud as Apollo on his forked hill."

POPE.

† The poetical talents of the Founder of the Lake School, which has risen like a Phœnix upon the ashes of the Della Cruscan, have been before visited by the hand of Satire; but there is one point in which something is left even for me to supply. We have the beauties of Johnson, of Addison, of Goldsmith, &c. &c. and why not the beauties of Wordsworth? " Let it be my task then to collect the scattered sweets till their united virtue torture the sense;" and to any ingenious collector who may be so inclined, I make a donation of them, advising

Count, as they fell, each blossom of the tree,
And cry with rapt'rous joy:—"Lo! one, two, three!"

NOTES.

him to arrange them under the heads of simple, pathetic, and descriptive.

Simplicity.

That way look, my infant, lo!
What a pretty baby show!
See the kitten on the wall
Sporting with the leaves that fall;
Withered leaves, one, two, and three,
From the lofty Elder tree!

My sister Emmeline and I
Together chas'd the butterfly;
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey with leaps and springs:
I followed on from brake to bush,
But she, *God love her!* feared to brush
The dew from off its wings.

Pathos (aut Bathos).

I grieved for Buonaparte with a vain
And an unthinking grief! the vital blood
Of that man's mind, what can it be? What food
Fed his first hopes?

Or cheer the " drunken lark," that upward flies,
Warbling its matins in cœrulean skies.

NOTES.

Festivals have I seen that were not names.
This is young Buonaparte's natal day;
And his is henceforth an established sway,
Consul for life.

Toussaint! the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the rural milkmaid by her cow
Sing in thy hearing, or thou liest now
Alone in some *dark dungeon's earless den*,
O miserable chieftain!
.....Yet die not!

——Great God, I'd rather be
A pagan *suckled in a creed outworn*,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn!

The Descriptive.

The river glideth at its own sweet will!
Dear God! the very h[illegible]
And all that mighty heart (the river's) is lying still!

They *bolted* on me thus, and [illegible]!

And, *in the twinkling of an eye*.....

Then Wilson, gentle Wilson, soft should tread
Each blooming bower, and flower-bespangled mead;

NOTES.

More Twinklings.

O gentle sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion?

The Sky-Lark.

And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I!

——Happy liver!
With a soul as strong as a mountain river.

The Nightingale.

O nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart, &c. &c.

The green Linnet.

A brother of the leaves he seems,
When in a moment forth he *teems*
His little song in *gushes*.....

Where, as the humming bird before him flew,
Sipping with " tiny " bill the morning dew,
The Bard should start with wonder and delight,
And hail the " blessed vision of the light!"

With these had vanished then a motley Band,
That now around the Muses' temple stand,
Casting their offerings on the sacred shrine,
As grateful tribute to the " tuneful Nine."
Had these but gone, as would they had, from hence
To plague in other regions Common Sense,

NOTES.

A *Daisy.*

A little Cyclop with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy.

He finds a glow worm, and

——" great joy had I!"

Puts it beneath a tree where it shines, and the

I led my Lucy to the spot: " Look here
O joy it was for her, and joy for me!

Then had my task been spared; nor I decreed
To censure witlings, and give fools their meed.
Fated myself to join the exiled throng,
An humble scribbler 'mid the "sons of song."

While Folly's children haunt Apollo's fame,
Startling the Muses from their lov'd domain,
The worst, rank scum of a degraded age,
Pour all their scrawling fury on the Stage.
No painter's aid our sterner fathers sought,
To brighten nonsense, or to strengthen thought;
Rough from the life their mimic scenes they drew,
Enough for them if but to Nature true.
Their gaudier sons the path of Taste forego,
And greet, for Sense, the dazzled eye with Show.
E'en Actors now to Elephants* submit,
And splendid Pageants fill the place of Wit.

NOTES.

* Si foret in terris, rideret Democritus, seu
Diversum confusa genus panthera camelo,

So pass they on;—repeated ev'ry night,
Shakspeare, e'en Shakspeare, ceases to delight:
His Tempest* mangled to amuse the Town,
Makes simp'ring Folly smile, and Wisdom frown:

NOTES.

Sive elephas albus vulgi converteret ora:
Spectaret populum ludis attentiùs ipsis,
Ut sibi præbentem mimo spectacula plura:
SCRIPTORES AUTEM NARRARE PUTARET ASELLO
FABELLAM SURDO. HOR. *Epist.* lib. ii. 1.

And so it is,

The Town, the Town, good Pit, has Asses' ears!

Baviad.

* Alluding to an alteration from the Tempest of Shakspeare, by Dry[illegible]n, wholly unworthy of that great man, and, as the Compilers of the Biographia Dramatica remark, "a fruit entirely unequal to the noble stock on which it is engrafted." Yet the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre thought proper to revive this with all the aid of scenery, machinery, &c. &c.

Hæc fierent, si testiculi vena ulla paterna
Viveret in nobis. [illegible] Sat. 1.

And if, perchance, the Public Prints proclaim
Some new production with a sounding name,
Some child that Morton, Reynolds helped to raise,
(Undaunted rivals for the vacant bays,)
Hundreds with eager eyes and footsteps haste,
Decide its fate, and form the Public Taste.
Friends of the Drama's spurious son, they meet,
Thund'ring their judgment from the Critic's seat,
Nor yet condemn, though founded on some plot
The theme of novels, or the tale of Scott*.

NOTES.

* Mr. Reynolds has formed a tragi-comic, melo-dramatic, farcical opera from a French novel, by Madam Cottin; and Mr. Morton, another from the "Lady of the Lake."

> Mais j'apprends qu' aujourd'hui Melpomène se propose
> D'abaisser son cothurne et de pleurer en *prose*.

I have a more serious charge against Mr. Reynolds. He had the dangerous vanity to attempt, and the Public the folly to applaud, an alteration from one of Dryden's best plays *in prose*!!! In this respect he has, indeed, only followed Mr.

Still these are harmless; as their Authors live 785
On the poor nourishment their brains can give.

NOTES.

Bayes' "first rule," i. e. "the rule of transversion, changing verse into prose." But Mr. Bayes's was a "regula duplex," for he tells us he sometimes changed "*prose* into *verse*;" a fault I am far from imputing to Mr. Reynolds—Solvitur sphinx.—This is the whole mystery of Mr. Reynolds's playmaking transactions, and thus it is that the "Renegade" is "*founded*," as he modestly calls it, on Don Sebastian. The latter, however, has undergone a further amputation; for, it seems, a melo-drama must not consist of more than three acts—Be it so—Yet, strange to say, as it now stands, it is still too long by Shakspeare's standard.

> A play there is, my lord, some (three acts) long,
> Which is as brief as I have known a play;
> But by (three acts), my lord, it is too long,
> Which makes it tedious.

To proceed to the dialogue.—This is almost literally preserved, in the serious part, as in the original, except that care has been taken to break the rhythm and prevent the ear being sensible that

But when a Man, whom Genius never blest,
Who never yet one requisite possess'd

NOTES.

it ever was verse. But it is whimsical to follow Mr. Reynolds, when he walks upon his own stilts.—Take a specimen:

ANT. .....oft we've gain'd by townsmen's glowing zeal; for let some popular chief but cry "Halloo!"—lo! in a trice, the shouting herd rush forth—the gates are barricadoed—and "one and all's" the word—true cocks o' the game!—that never ask for what or whom they fight—but turn them out and shew them but a foe—cry "Liberty"—that's glorious cause of quarrel!—I augur triumph from these stout allies!—come, and contest o'er, thine, fair Olivia, only thine.

I cannot so easily pass over the under-plot, which is entirely borrowed, without the slightest acknowledgment in the printed copy, from the Spanish Fryar. In some parts, not only the business of the scene, but the words are nearly the same: as in act iii. scene 2.

PEDRO. .....if I don't prove he was as errant a disguised desperado! with a Demogorgon face! with a Sampson's arm! [ANTONIO, *who has entered behind, unseen by all but* PEDRO, *holds up his stick at him:*] No, I own, I own, he was so mild—so well behaved—so feeble! that a child....

That forms the Bard, and his inspired line,
Dares, with unhallow'd hopes, approach the shrine,
Where, pillow'd by the Muses, Dryden lies,
And from his temples would purloin the prize;
All who, to cheer the slowly-passing day,
Have linger'd o'er the Poet, and his Lay,

NOTES.

DOWAN. .....Prevarication!

Spanish Fryar, act v.

[*Enter* LORENZO, *who comes behind the company, and stands at his father's back unseen, over against* GOMEZ.]

GOMEZ. .....He 's the first begotten of Beelzebub, with a face as terrible as Demagorgon: [LORENZO *peeps over* ALPHONSO'S *head, and stares at* GOMEZ:] No, I lie; he 's a proper handsome fellow! well proportioned, and clean shaped, with a face like a cherubim——

PEDRO. .....What, backward and forward?——

If this mode of adoption be allowed, I shall soon expect to see "a Grand Historical Drama" from King J[illegible]ry the Vth, or Hamlet.—So much, then, for Mr. Reynolds' prose. Of his poetry I shall say nothing. The Performers who are condemned to sing such ineffable stuff, are heartily to be pitied.

Should round his tomb in arms united stand,
To save his relics from a Spoiler's hand.

Is then the Stage of all its honors 'reft?
" Are none, none living," not one Poet left?
Too true, that Wit with Sheridan* retir'd,
And Nature's Bard in Cumberland expir'd.
Last of a good old school†! what pow'rs were thine,
When petty Wits, with wonder, saw thee shine

NOTES.

* Si nescis illum, scire te nihil quoque
Par est decoris, et leporis, et salis,
Et Gratiarum; quicquid et Phœbus docet
Charos alumnos.

JACOBI PINONIS *Elogium Boncfonii.*

† Praised, admired, and loved by the brilliant assemblage of Wits that graced the earlier part of the present reign, Mr. Cumberland survived them all. Survived to see an age of lead succeed to one of golden splendor. But his was a green old age. " Aquilæ senectus." The decline of a vigorous intellect, whose faculties seemed almost unimpaired by Time.

In ev'ry style that Man has e'er design'd
To charm the fancy, or improve the mind!
Oft have I trac'd thee through thy varied way,
And mark'd the splendor of thy setting day;
Thy Child of Impulse*, with delight, pursued
Thro' transient error, and spontaneous good;
Heard the poor Pilgrim all his woes recite,
And sighed in pity o'er the Carmelite!

When German schools, th' Historic Muse shall own,
O'er Public Taste the wizard spell had thrown;
When *liberal* Britons could endure to lose
Their Poet's numbers for a Playwright's prose;
A woman's hand† redeem'd the with'ring bays,
And strove to emulate what all must praise.

NOTES.

* The West Indian.

† Miss Baillie, Authoress of "Plays on the Passions;" for the rest, let Mr. Scott speak:

....." She, the bold enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!

Yes, it was thine, O Baillie! to unfold
What Truth had rescued from the Bigot's hold;
To blend, with modern sweetness, ancient force,
And trace the Passions even to their source:
Yet, ere destroying Time shall end thy page,
Correct the growing errors of the Stage;
Come forth, in Shakspeare's genuine garb arrayed,
And snatch the laurel from a "Renegade!"

"Still," cry the learn'd, "a Tragic Bard survives,
And Cumberland in classic Coleridge lives;

NOTES.

From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakspeare lived again."

MARMION, *Introd. to Cant.* ..

For genius, spirit, harmony, and force,
What modern Tragedy can match "Remorse*?"

NOTES.

* Ever ready to acknowledge improvement where it is to be found, I congratulate Mr. Coleridge on his return, in part, to the plain-beaten road of Common Sense. But where all has been done, much still remains to be undone. Remorse is far, very far from a perfect tragedy. It possesses the same faults that Johnson complains of in the Odes of Gray. "The images are magnified by affectation; the language is labored into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. 'Double, double toil and trouble.' He has a kind of strutting dignity; and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible; and there is too little appearance of ease and nature." The construction of the plot is very injudicious. The want of incident renders it deficient in stage effect, and the imagination receives no stimulus from a Tale, whose denouement is anticipated long before the proper period for disclosure.—The character of Alvar throughout bears a very close resemblance to Cumberland's St. Valori; but how differently do they express their feelings! Never was the superiority of nature over art more evident! Without meaning any invidious compa-

If labor'd verse can recompense for ease,—
If "oh's" can move, and affectation please,— 830

NOTES.

rison, for between Cumberland and Coleridge there can exist none, I will extract a few lines from each; where Alvar discovers himself to his mistress, and St. Valori to his wife.—

ALVAR. .....Alvar was not murdered.
Be calm! be calm, sweet maid!
TERESA. [*Wildly.*] Nay, nay, but tell me!
[*A pause, then presses her forehead.*]
——O 'tis lost again
This dull confused pain——
[*A pause, she gazes at* ALVAR.]
——————Mysterious man!
Methinks I can not fear thee: for thine eye
Doth swim with love and pity—Well! Ordonio——»
Oh my foreboding heart! and *he* suborned thee,
And thou didst spare his life? Blessings shower on thee,
As many as the drops twice counted o'er
In the fond faithful heart of his Teresa!
ALVAR. .....I can endure no more. The Moorish Sorcerer
Exists but in the stain upon this face.
That picture——

If scribblers, throwing Incident away,
Can out of nothing still produce a Play,—

NOTES.

TERESA. [*Advances towards him.*] Ha! speak on!

ALVAR. .....Beloved Teresa!
It told but half the truth. O let this portrait
Tell all — that Alvar lives — that he is here!
Thy much deceived but ever faithful Alvar.

Remorse, act v. scene 1.

ST. VALORI. [*In the disguise of a Carmelite, and labouring under the impression of* MATILDA'S *infidelity.*]
Deep was the stroke that dire assassin gave,
Yet short of life it stopt; unhorsed and fallen,
Weltering in blood, your wounded husband lay,
Till haply found by charitable strangers
Journeying to Venice, he was healed, restored,
And thence embarking, by a barbarous rover
Was captured. — Start not; but repress your terrors.

MATILDA. .....Admire not that I tremble; marvel rather
That I hear this and live. St. Valori captured!
The bravest Captain of the Cross enslaved by barbarous
Pagans!

ST. VAL. Tedious years he suffered
Of hard captivity——

If, ere the first, dull, whining scene be past,
A plot foretold can int'rest to the last,—
Then, Coleridge, will I bless "our favor'd clime;"
Then, and then only, call thy Play sublime.

Others there are, who say the Drama's store
Is quite exhausted, and can yield no more.
No more, indeed! why Fashion's hot-bed rears,
Vices enough to move the Muse's tears;

NOTES.

MATILDA. Oh, where, ye Heavens!
Where was your justice then? And died he there?
ST. VAL. 'Twas not his lot to find a distant grave.
MATILDA. Where, where? Oh, speak! release me from the rack!
Where did my hero fall?
ST. VAL. Where did he fall!
Nor Pagan swords, nor slavery's galling chain,
Nor murderous daggers, Afric's burning clime,
Toils, storms, nor shipwrecks killed him—here he fell!
Grief burst his heart—here in this spot he fell!
[*He falls to the ground.*]

And Man, the puppet, is as much a Fool
As in the days of Wycherley's old school.
But, if the World no change of scene unfold,
Still 'tis some merit to re-touch the old:
Terence, from Steele, might half his Andria claim,
And Hoadley's Rake, and Congreve's, are the same.
Look then around; for, change howe'er they will,
Rogues still are Rogues, and Puppies, Puppies still;
And, while the World obeys this kindly rule,
The Comic Muse shall never want her fool.
Behold the Quack, whose ignorance is wealth,—
The legal Murd'rer of the Public health;—
The Patentee, whom Royal Signets give
Exclusive license to impose and live;—
The Alderman, whose subtle arts obtain
What e'en Professor Davy sighed to gain;
Tho' now no more the eye "*Professor*" meets,
"Sir *Humphrey* Davy*" blazes through the streets;

NOTES.

* It is far from my intention to offer any disrespect to Sir

" Sir *Humphrey* Davy " swells a thousand throats;
" Sir *Humphrey* Davy " Davies Giddy * quotes; 860

NOTES.

Humphrey Davy; but I lament that he should think a title will confer any dignity upon a name already illustrious by the talents and virtues of its possessor.

* May 26th, 1812.—On the motion that the Publican's bill " be committed," Mr. Davies Giddy observed: " that pewter pots were supposed to give a greater relish to porter; and, indeed, it had been lately discovered by his countryman and friend, Sir H. Davy, that a Galvanic influence was produced by drinking beer out of pewter; and it was right that those who drank this beverage should have as many agreeable sensations excited as possible."

Mr. Whitbread " trusted that able Chymist, Sir He Davy, would shortly discover that roast beef acquired a peculiar relish from being served up on pewter plates—as this would still more increase the produce of the Cornish mines. He should be the last man who wished to diminish the consumption of porter; and he hoped the new information as to the best mode of drinking it, would increase the consumption next week; if it were only by way of experiment." *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxiii.

Yes, when, in grave debate for staggering sots,
The Commons voted against Pewter Pots,
He called the Chymist, 'mid the mighty din,
To prove Galvanic properties of Tin
Gave to the Beer, within the Tankard plac'd,
A tarter flavour, and a livelier taste.
Last see the Nobles, who, with eager joy,
Bid for Murillo's ugly, laughing Boy;
Who gaze enraptur'd on a Sign-Post scrawl,
If some kind Dutch name lend its friendly drawl;
Or rush to Sales of Caxton's and De Worde's,
By one's, by two's, by twenties, and by hordes.
There, while the Man of Eloquence displays
The venerable "trash of ancient days*,"

NOTES.

* The extraordinary infatuation which has lately exhibited itself among antiquated book-collectors and young noblemen, in the purchase of those early specimens of (principally British) Typography, whose value can consist only in the avidity with

Each marvels how no Fury could destroy 875
The "Recuyeuil of the Hystorye of Troye;"

NOTES.

which they are sought after by the admirers of Gothic crudities, as their rarity must have greatly decreased by the numbers in which they are found in the libraries of the curious, evinces a sickly taste for the fopperies of the Bibliomaniac, which is a bad omen for the Republic of Letters: for if the "quaynte conceytes" and learned fooleries of monkish historians, and the marvellous and bungling Romances of pedantic "Rhymers," are to prefer their claim to renown, for ages to come, merely as they have been written for the perusal of ages past, the tales of our childhood,—the achievements of Jack the Giant-Killer,—the adventures of Thomas Thumb,—the prowess of the Seven Champions, and the heroism of Earl Guy of Warwick, will descend to our posterity, as indeed they came to us, by oral tradition; but with increasing honors, and, perhaps, in fac-similes of illuminated MSS.—Were any thing of real value to be thus rescued by the munificence of wealth, or the patronage of genius, from that oblivion into which the emanations of talent had sunk equally with the productions of dulness, it would, indeed, derive additional claim to our veneration, from its antiquity; and the newly-discovered Optics of Ptolemy, wonderful as they intrinsically are,

And bends, with rev'rence, and exulting glee,
O'er "Frederyke of Jennen's Historye."

NOTES.

we peruse with still greater delight, when we reflect that they are consecrated by the veil of two thousand years! But shall the idle nonsense of a heavy monk (for to his Order in these times, Learning, such as it was, appears to have been confined) be singled out and bought up with rapture by opulent Bigots to the magic term between 1470 and 1530, to the detriment of those enlightened compositions of the last Century that have astonished Europe and illuminated the world? A Dunce, who happened to live four ages ago, is not therefore entitled to our admiration; and Bavius and Mævius stand execrated to eternity. A grossly indecent jest book, possessing, indeed, poignant wit,—il Decameroni di Boccacio,—of which a copy, equally old, was in possession of a nobleman, but wanting the title page; a complete one was sold at a late Duke's sale, at the enormous price of £2260! Oh Boccace! hadst thou foreseen this, thou wouldst have offered the whole of Astolpho's territory for such a sum! I subjoin this extract from Mr. Nicoll's catalogue of the 9d Day of the Duke of Roxburgh's sale, to prove to those, who flatter themselves that the fate of dulness is oblivion, and contemn the need of igno-

Then thousands mount up for a title page,
That tells, oh, glorious prize! a jest book's age. 880

NOTES.

rance, how mistaken such calculations are in an age, when nonsense need only be old to be adored, and pedantry be printed in black-letter, to grace the shelves of nobility. I particularly notice the Romances, to show that assertions, though advanced by genius and enforced by eloquence, may be ill-grounded; (for who is to believe Burke, "that the age of Chivalry is past," when the fortunes of Princes are expended in the purchase of descriptions of Tournaments?) and I submit these observations to demonstrate, that while I reverence the genius of antiquity, which has fostered the sublimest productions of human intellect, I would deprecate the respect paid to the jargon of clerical authorship, that has truly produced the abortions of distempered imaginations.

"The Recuyell of the Historye of Troye," by Raoule le Ferie, translated and printed by William Caxton, fol. blue moroc. Col'n. 1473, the only copy of the first book printed in the English language, and had belonged to Elizabeth Grey, Queen of Edward the IVth, bought by the Duke of Devonshire for £1060 10s. This purchase seems to have enhanced the value of all the succeeding

Spencers and Blandfords in the strife unite,
While Biblio-maniacs shudder at the sight;

NOTES.

Romances, as it appears, from Mr. Nicoll's Catalogue, that "The veray trew Hystorye of the valiant Knight Jason," printed at Anderwarpe, by Gerard Lera, 1492, was bought by the same nobleman for £94 10s.; and the Marquess of Blandford, to complete his classics, buys the (also very true, doubtless) Lyfe of Virgilius, with wood cuts, for £54 12s.

"The most pytifulle Hystorye of the noble Appolyn King of Thyre," 4to. M. G. L. is knocked down to Mr. Nornaville for £115 10s.; and the same gentleman, for "The Boke of the Fayte of Arms of Chyvalrye," blue Turkey, gilt leaves, gives £336.

Mr. Triphook obtains "The Storye of Frederyke of Jennen," with wood cuts, 1518, for £65 2s., and "The Storye of [illegible] of Nemegen" for £87.

Mr. Heber only pays £5[illegible] for "The right pleasaunte and goodlie Hystorye of the foure Sonnes of Aimon," 1554; [illegible] Earl Spencer for "that of Blanchardyn and Eglantyne," [illegible] at the end, puts down £215 5s.

Till, hours elapsing ere the Book be won,
It proves at last — an old Decameron!
Then Roxburgh's musty tomes and scurvy trials,
With all the Newgate scraps from Seven Dials,
Can fetch their hundreds, as a set complete
Of ballad prints, that swarm in ev'ry street.

Yet these but serve, in easier flow, to guide
Thro' varied channels Fortune's endless tide.
In wooden types, the idly learned Sage
May trace the follies of a greener age;

NOTES.

The prouffytable Boke for (the heir to the Duke of Roxburgh and) Manc's Soule, called the Chastysinge of God's Children, is sold for £ 140. I. B.

We should not greatly admire that well-known sacrifice made by the early converts to Christianity, if the books they committed to the flames had not more intrinsic value than such contemptible [illegible] if they were not more truly worth 50,000 pieces of silver.

And feudal Systems in their zenith see,
Degrading Law, to honor Chivalry.

Not for such themes the modern Bard may claim
Praise from the living, from the future—fame!
Majestic Spenser's once enchanting lays
Yield to the measures of our lighter days;
And Dryden's fame had scarce suffic'd to save
His promis'd "Arthur" from an early grave:
Tho' still one Minstrel moulds the antique rhyme
For Elfin prowess in the "olden time;"
Apes Border doggrel, scorns poetic laws,
And courts the bubble of misplaced applause.
But that applause must ebb as well as rise,
The impulse ceases and the bubble flies.
Like Spenser's soon may be the fate of Scott,
Prais'd by one age, and by the next—forgot!

For what but dark Oblivion can await
Those idle fictions of romantic state,

Where savage Priests, from horrid compact bred,
Offspring at once of living and of dead,
Duergar's, Da'inshi's, and Felon Sows,
And Pigmies, trembling 'neath a Wizard's blows,
Are rais'd on ev'ry wretched, weak pretence,
To shock the reason and confound the sense.

But if to please and to instruct were one,
If num'rous beauties might for faults atone,
Who can portray with juster, bolder pen,
The rock, the stream, the mountain, and the glen,
And all the wonders of that northern clime,
Where Nature reigns, unbounded and sublime?
Who can so well conflicting passions trace,
As changing forms upon a mirror's face—
Bid Truth and Feeling in his strains combine,
And thrilling Horror "live along the line?"

Scott! so often warn'd, let judgment plead,
Nor Monkish Bards thy truer taste mislead;

Leave Lindesay and the Rhymer, by themselves
To rot forgotten on the mouldering shelves;
Fly from the circle, which a wizard age
Has trac'd around thy now neglected page;
Exert that Genius which would paint, at best,
The rude commotions in a robber's breast,
A nobler path of Fancy to design,
And make our Reason as our Passions—thine!

Forgot the errors* of his earlier days,
His prurient page and Aristippian lays,
Moore, too, again may wake the pow'rs divine
That form'd his soft, but too licentious line:
His Country's Poet, to a blameless theme
Restrict the wand'rings of his fervid dream;

NOTES.

* Sera nunquam est ad bonos mores via,
Quem pœnitet peccasse, pœna est innocens.
SENECA, *Agamemnon.*

And give to future times a sweeter strain,
Than Erin's harp may e'er resound again.
The sacred few, whose just "applause is fame,"
No more will turn in pity from his name;
But hear the strain with unreproving sighs,
And own the pow'r of "Irish Melodies!"

So when the Sun, that blaz'd with noontide beam,
Casts from the glowing West a parting gleam,
The wondering eye can ev'ry tint admire,
Of equal splendor but diminish'd fire;
And now, in confidence, the Orb explore,
Whose dazzling rays it dar'd not meet before.

If such were all, whose names untold remain,
The voice of censure would be heard in vain.
But in the breasts of few this spirit lives,
And isolated Genius scarce survives:
While Madness scatters wide her hundred arms,
On downy pillows sheds her potent charms;

Treads in the forum, hovers round the throne,
And makes e'en Britain's Senators her own.
What numbers still, all "honorable men,"
Press on my thoughts, and crowd upon my pen!—
But these I leave to some adventrous knight,
Who loves with "Shadows of a Shade*" to fight;
And, wearied by my toils, will ne'er resume
The Gorgon shield, and sable-tinctur'd plume.
Here, Satire, then we pause; my descant sung,
My mirror clouded, and my lyre unstrung;
I, whom nor politics, nor party rage,
Nor darker Envy, forc'd upon the stage,
Will keep my hard, rebellious spirit down,
Stay the rude laugh, and smooth the ruder frown:

NOTES.

* Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even shadows have their shadows too!
CHURCHILL.

Of neither reason nor yet temper 'reft
By Barrett's nonsense, Grenville's daring theft,
Forensic Wharton's eloquence debas'd,
Coleman's lewd tale, or Scott's perverted taste.
Or, if a sigh should sometimes intervene,
When, fondly marking what we once have been,
The eye, delighted with a scene so fair,
Shall disappointed turn to what we are,
With moody Barbauld I may take my stand,
Read the sad presage of my native land
Inscrib'd, like Babylon's, upon the wall,
And mourn in silence o'er its hapless fall.

Far, far from me, that cold, affected art,
That sullen, callous apathy of heart,
Which Nature's genial impulse ne'er obeys,
But finds in all, still something to dispraise.
No, in my earliest youth I learnt t' admire,
Unless perhaps but with ingenuous fire;
To view an error only in its cause,
And honor all that merited applause.

Then, too, I hallow'd first th' Aonian Mount,
And quaffed delighted from the Muse's fount;
Not, as from Lethe's dark and fateful stream,
To drown the World in one oblivious dream,
But, with its spell, to charm the languid hours,
And strew my future path of life with flow'rs.
And,—if, nor Fancy's flatt'ring hope mislead,
Nor chast'ning Heav'n, in wisdom, hath decreed
That Death shall prematurely close the strain,
And make the dreams of youth, like Gifford's *, vain,
The Muse, whose honest warmth, or right or wrong,
Braves all the rancour of the Sons of Song,

NOTES.

* An hour may come, so I delight to dream,
When slowly wandering by thy sacred stream,
Majestic Thames! I leave the world behind,
And give to Fancy all th' entrapt'ring mind;
An hour may come, when I shall strike the lyre
To nobler themes, &c. &c.

Mæviad.

Shall dauntless mix among her willing foes,
And tempt that justice which she now bestows.

Yet, tho' her bounded pow'rs forbid to rise,
And bear from older, wiser heads the prize,
Pride shall restrain her from the humble group,
Who to the town and all its idols stoop,
And point to themes that Judgment may allow,
Nor Friendship blame, nor Virtue disavow.
This may be mine, ere age shall chill the fire,
That, scarce repress'd, has ventur'd to aspire.

NOTES.

This anticipation may yet be verified; but [illegible]ford should recollect the words of Young:

——————Life speeds away
From point to point, tho' seeming to stand still.
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth,
Too subtle for the movement to be seen;
Yet soon *man's time* is up, and we are gone.

Th' impartial Destinies have now assign'd
A task far diff'rent to my wavering mind.
Without a call like Huntingdon's, I came
To preach plain sense to Sectaries in fame;
To brand the heterodox, to strengthen truth,
And teach the aged what I 've learnt in youth.
But, while I thus diffuse as pure a law
As grave M—th—s, or as light D—b—s,
I cannot, dare not hope a voice like mine,
Tho' ventured boldly for the tuneful Nine,
Should chance be heard amid the clam'rous peal,
That deafens Pindus with unsparing zeal.
Loud, and more loud will rise the notes of fear,
And drown the Monitor they dread to hear.

Farewell! then, Muse, who still hast urg'd mine ire
T' avenge the cause of thine insulted lyre;
Farewell! thou joy of many a weary hour,
My bosom thanks thee for thy kindling power.
Farewell!—ye rhymsters, who, with idle speed,
Read but to write, and write but what ye read:—

Ye servile Dramatists, who, hir'd to please,
Make Plays and Pantomimes with equal ease;
Ye wise Black-letter Critics, who would know
What blockheads said a thousand years ago;—
Scrawl, dramatize, or pore, do what ye will,
For I shall "suffer" all, and yet "be still."
Here, in the common cause, at once unite,
And aim together every shaft of spite;
Fear not *his* vengeance, who all vengeance dares,
Nor mercy deal to him, who none or courts or spares.

As a final observation, I may be permitted to say a few words upon the motives which occasioned the publication of the foregoing Poem. However disinclined we may be to admit the fantastical alliance between Politics and Poetry, which a late Writer in the Edinburgh Review so positively inculcates, it cannot be denied that our national verse has undergone a visible and radical change since the latter era, when "Marlbro' conquered, and when Prior sang." One innovator has attempted to vary the pause, by the introduction of a mixed cadence, in which the subordinate word is sometimes invested with the emphasis which should properly belong to its principal, and has presumed to abridge the use of

the article; a second, with all the pedantry of learning, would establish English dactylics and spondees; while others, with a nobler aim, reject the monotonous antithesis of Pope, while they unite his harmony to the vigor of thought and expression so admirable in his predecessor. Whether all these, acting separately or in conjunction, have produced any thing like a new standard of poetic taste, I leave Theorists to determine: the evils which extremes of innovation have occasioned, I trust are sufficiently exposed in the preceding pages. To make those evils manifest, by strengthen precept by all the force of example, has been my ardent endeavour. Of the minor subjects, upon which, contrary to my original intention, I have been induced to expatiate, there can scarcely be a difference of opinion. Immorality and Infidelity will, even in these corrupt times, find but few defenders.

For the lines from v. 491 to v. 500, and from v. 851 to v. 888, as well as the two notes with the initials I. B., I am indebted to a friend, to whom I embrace this opportunity of making my acknowledgments; and conclude with this assurance, that however weak may be my censures, and however misplaced my praises, the former have received no incitement from personal or venial malevolence, and the latter are spontaneous expressions of gratified sensibility corresponding feelings of intellectual gratification.

THE END.

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